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## Saudis kill children more than terrorists do, Iran says

**POLITICS** Iran's deputy permanent representative to the UN has said that Saudi Arabia is killing more children in Yemen than "Al-Qaeda, ISIS and Nusra" put together around the globe.

Eshaq Al Habib made the remarks during a speech at the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday.

Following is full text of his speech published by IRNA:

The great writer and philosopher, Leo Tolstoy, once said that an arrogant person considers himself perfect. This is the chief harm of arrogance. It interferes with a person's main task in life—becoming a better person.

The same seems to be applicable to countries. Those who are so much concentrated on others that terribly fail to see violations happen in front of their own eyes. Complacency and arrogance often lead to loss of reasoning and sound judgment. **→ 2**

## Hariri didn't resign freely: Emil Lahoud

By staff & agencies

Émile Lahoud, the former Lebanese president, has said that Prime Minister Saad Hariri did not resign freely, Al-Maydeen reported on Wednesday.

Lahoud said Hariri should return to Lebanon as demanded by President Michel Aoun and the Lebanese people.

Meanwhile, Lebanese President Mi-

chel Aoun says the House of Saud regime is holding Prime Minister Saad Hariri, calling the detention as an act of aggression against his country and a violation of international human rights regulations.

"Nothing justifies Hariri's lack of return for 12 days. We therefore consider him detained. This is a violation of the Vienna agreements and human rights law." **→ 13**

## Pakistan due to finalize FTA with Iran next week

By Mahnaz Abdi

**KARACHI**— A Pakistani trade delegation is scheduled to visit Tehran on November 21 and 22 for finalizing a free trade agreement (FTA) with Iran, according to the commercial counselor of Pakistan to Tehran.

Nazar Muhammad Ranjha, leading a delegation of Iranian businessmen from different sectors to visit Expo Pakistan 2017

(held from November 9 to 12 at Karachi Expo Center), made the announcement in an interview with the Tehran Times on the sidelines of the exhibit.

Elaborating on the measures and targets for the expansion of trade between Iran and Pakistan, the Pakistani counselor said: "We have already achieved some targets." **→ 4**



## PERSPECTIVE

**Mahmood Monshipouri**  
Francisco State University  
and the University of California, Berkeley

## Dangers of cold war between Riyadh and Tehran

Saudi Arabia's frustrating and catastrophic entanglements in Yemen have spilled over into Lebanon, where the young Saudi prince Mohamed Bin Salam seems fixated on encouraging the Israeli invasion of Lebanon to eradicate Hezbollah's influence in that country and the region more generally. It is not unreasonable to assume that this troubling situation is a direct consequence of the encouragement that the Trump administration has in fact given the Saudis. In the wake of the tense political climate in the region, several questions come to mind. Could all this be related to the US withdrawal from the region? Does this withdrawal signal a US return to an off-shore balancing strategy, in which the United States provides the necessary military wherewithal to its allies in the region to counter Iran? Is the new leadership in Saudi Arabia emboldened by such a strategy?

It is worth remembering that this strategy does not necessarily include the absence of US interests, either in associated political regimes or non-state actors. The sudden abdication of the Lebanese prime minister Saad Hariri, who has become a pawn in Saudi efforts to isolate their regional rival, Iran, and its ally Hezbollah (The New York Times, November 14, 2017), illustrates one way in which Riyadh intends to undercut Iranian influence in the region. Hariri's resignation under pressure from Riyadh is also a direct result of giving the Saudis the go-ahead to reclaim and redirect the power structure of the Middle East. This may even portend a partnership of sorts among Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the United States aimed at rolling back increasing Iranian influence in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. Yet this partnership has its own limits and perils. A fundamental question is whether and the extent to which a new war between Israel and Hezbollah would serve the region's order and stability.

History is full of instructive examples. Israeli attacks on South Lebanon (1985–2000) and the 2006 Lebanon War in response to the abduction of two Israeli reserve soldiers by the Hezbollah have shown that Hezbollah cannot easily be defeated or dismantled. If, however, Israel decides to attack Hezbollah, **→ 7**

## Israel is unbridled regime: Islamic Jihad rep.

By Zahra Khezri

**TEHRAN** — Representative of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Tehran says "the Zionist regime is formed on the basis of a violation of human rights backed by the world's greatest powers."

As a guest of the Tehran Times at the Press Exhibition in Tehran, Nasser Abu Sharif said, "In fact, there is no human rights in the world; it is all a sham in the hands of powerful states."

Following is an excerpt of the interview:

**■ In your opinion, have the Palestinians made a remarkable move to grab the world's attention to the crimes committed by Israel?**

A: First of all, you can see every day signs of protest in every corner of the Palestinian territory. For instance, silence strikes, candlelight vigils, strikes in support of prisoners, and so on.

Every Friday, a rally against Israeli settlements is held in which fighters even from the other side of the borders join in. And all the national and international media are there to cover it.

But a regime like the Zionist regime is formed on the basis of a violation of human rights backed by the world's greatest powers such as England, France and the United States. The Zionist regime is a ruthless regime, set on the violation of human rights and intentional law. It continues to commit crimes against the Palestinian people and constructs settlements in the occupied territory of Palestine.



Underneath objections to Israeli settlements lies plenty of support otherwise Netanyahu couldn't dare to publicly declare the construction of settlements.

If an Israeli soldier is killed, the whole world will protest; the United States and its president condemn the killing of the soldier. That is not only because of the power of Israel, but

**“The normalization of relations between the Arab countries has paved the way for those who formerly condemned the Zionist regime today embrace it.”**

## Iran calls UN human rights resolution 'refutable'

**POLITICS**

**TEHRAN** — The Iranian Foreign Ministry has denounced a recent UN human rights resolution against the Islamic Republic as "refutable and unacceptable".

The resolution "which was pushed by Canada and some other Western countries" has used human rights as a political tool, ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Wednesday.

Such use of human rights "against the independent countries of the world" is a "condemnable

and erroneous act" that will only result in the weakening of the notion of human rights, the diplomat said.

He stressed that as a religious-democratic system, the Islamic Republic always makes effort to uphold its international obligations with regards to human rights.

The Third Committee of the UN General Assembly on Tuesday approved the resolution by a vote of 83 to 30.

## 'Earthquake is not dangerous if you are prepared'

By Setareh Behrooz

**TEHRAN** — Iranians all around the world spend bitter days receiving sad news about the aftermath of recent earthquake shooked the western Kermanshah Province, Iran.

The magnitude 7.3 temblor jolted Kermanshah late on Sunday, leaving at least 432 dead and more than 9,400 injured. It was so massive that many western, southern and central provinces of Iran as well as neighboring countries felt tremors.

The earthquake caused widespread devastation in the town of Sarpol-e Zahab, about 15km from the border in Kermanshah.

Some 40,000 buildings were razed to the ground and left many homeless who are still in

need a warm place to sleep.

People in other cities and countries rushed to help earthquake victims by donating money or dispatching relief kits to the place.

But what is the best way to counter natural disasters? How can we reduce the hazard of earthquake? To answer these questions, the Tehran Times has conducted an interview on Tuesday with the head of technical training center at the Red Crescent Society Mohammad Montazeri.

**■ Construct earthquake-resistant buildings!**

"Earthquake, as a natural disaster, is not dangerous if we are ready for it," Montazeri said.

to suppress the Palestinians with no regard for humanity.

In fact, there is no human rights in the world; it is all a sham in the hands of powerful states. There are no rights for the vulnerable and oppressed people. And the other thing is that, unfortunately, the Arab and Islamic world cannot form a united front and therefore they are frail.

**■ Mr. Abu Sharif, did you expect the prime minister of a highly important country like India to be a guest of Netanyahu? What do you make of that?**

A: The (Indian) prime minister's trip to Israel is unfortunate. The normalization of relations between the Arab countries and Israel has paved the way for those who formerly condemned the Zionist regime embrace it today.

When a country like Saudi Arabia maintains both 'secret' and 'open' relations with Israel, India's relationship won't be a match to that of Saudi's with Israel in terms of closeness. They justify their relations with Israel on the pretext of examining the issue of Palestine and the Arab world.

In our view, the recognition of the Zionist regime as a state should remain 'unacceptable in the Arab and Islamic world'.

The recognition of this regime is unacceptance in terms of humanity, religion, nationality, and ethnicity as its recognition as a state will prepare the ground for the rest of the world to establish an 'existential' relationship with it.

Russia and China, two members of the General Assembly, voted against the move. Many countries abstained, saying their abstention is intended to encourage Tehran to cooperate with the UN in protecting human rights.

The resolution nevertheless welcomed some recent progress on Iran's human rights record, especially a new legislation to limit the death penalty for drug offenses.

"Construction of earthquake-resistant buildings is very important. These structures can be used as shelters during earthquake in the way that the residents don't need to leave the building during an earthquake as they can find safe spots in advance," he explained.

He said that the expenses, which are used for relief and rescue during an earthquake, should be spent on reinforcing the existing buildings and also paying attention to newly constructed buildings to be earthquake-resistance.

"Unfortunately some newly constructed buildings were collapsed during Kermanshah earthquake, which shows a lack of strict supervision," Montazeri said. **→ 9**



## ARTICLE

**By Hossein Askari**  
George Washington University  
professor

## Islamic development bank (IDB) — another Saudi stooge

Saudi discrimination against everything Iranian and Shia is so broad that it has even appeared in my own life. Am I upset? Yes, but more importantly I feel sad for the Middle East and for all Muslims. If I feel upset over something inconsequential, imagine how Shia Muslims feel in Saudi Arabia, in Bahrain and in Yemen as they face Saudi oppression or bombs day in and day out with the Trump administration's blessing. Sometimes personal experiences shine a ray of light on issues that experts may miss.

Let's begin with my experience. In April of this year, the Islamic Development Bank engaged me as the technical advisor/editor on a report on Islamic finance, a flagship annual publication that they produce in conjunction with the World Bank.

After I had completed my assignment, I was informed on October 24 that the payment for my services was wired to my bank account in the United States and that I should receive notification in two days or so. After a week, I contacted them because I had not received a notification. As with any bureaucracy, they informed me that they would look into it.

Another week went by and still nothing. I wrote again to a different person in the organization. The reply was that someone else was instructed to investigate. On November 11, I wrote again, questioning the veracity of their usual words, "we will look into it."

Then on November 12, I received an email that the problematic issue was my place of birth—Iran! Of course, I was upset and when I said so, the IDB changed its story, namely it was my U.S. bank that would not accept the wire! For an organization that purports to be the development bank for all Muslim countries to take such a stand and be so tainted by Saudi Arabia's discriminatory and divisive preoccupations is to me nothing short of outrageous. **→ 7**



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Rouhani  
scheduled to visit  
Austria soon

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani is slated to visit Austria in the near future in a bid to boost bilateral relations between the two countries, the Austrian ambassador to Tehran said on Tuesday.

The Austrian foreign minister has decided to dispatch one of his deputies to the Islamic Republic to make arrangements for Rouhani's upcoming visit, Stefan Scholz said in a meeting with head of Iran's Chamber of Commerce Gholam Hossein Shafei in Tehran.

The Rouhani administration has been keen to expand economic cooperation with European countries, including Austria.



Iranian deputy  
FM meets  
Syria's Assad

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Arab and African Affairs Hossein Jaber Ansari met on Wednesday with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus to discuss ties, Fars news agency reported.

Jaber Ansari was in Moscow on Tuesday for talks with top Russian officials. He met his Russian counterpart Mikhail Bogdanov to discuss issues of mutual interest particularly developments in Syria.

The diplomat has been Iran's top negotiator in the peace talks on the Syria conflict in Astana, the Kazakh capital.



Advisor  
urges closer  
parliamentary ties  
with Turkey

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior foreign policy advisor to the Iranian parliament speaker, met on Tuesday with Turkey's ambassador to Tehran to discuss expansion of parliamentary relations and closer coordination between the two neighbors.

Amir Abdollahian and the Turkish envoy Reza Hakan Tekin called for efforts to boost relations between the two neighbors.

Pointing to an upcoming meeting of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), which will be held in Istanbul next week, Amir Abdollahian said closer parliamentary ties can help strengthen actions against regional challenges, including terrorism.



Russian, Iranian,  
Turkish foreign  
ministers to  
discuss Syria soon

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The Russian, Iranian and Turkish foreign ministers will hold contacts soon on how to settle the Syrian conflict, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov announced on Wednesday.

"Soon, we will continue these contacts, including at the level of foreign ministers with Turkish and Iranian colleagues," Lavrov said, TASS news agency reported.

Lavrov recalled that Russian and Turkish Presidents, Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, met in Sochi on Monday, focusing on further coordination of steps for advancing the Syrian settlement.



U.S. Congress  
moves bill  
threatening Iran  
nuclear deal

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The U.S. Congress has taken another measure that make it more difficult for Iran to purchase commercial aircraft from firms that do business in the United States.

A new bill called the Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act was approved by the House Financial Services Committee on Tuesday. The move comes as a blow to the 2015 nuclear deal that Iran signed with six world powers.

"Iran would view [the bill's] enactment into law as a breach of the JCPOA," Kenneth Katzman, an Iran expert at the Congressional Research Service, was quoted by Al-Monitor as saying.



Netanyahu vows to  
act alone against  
Iran if given no  
choice

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed on Tuesday to act alone against Iran if given no choice, in order to stop what he called "Iran's aggression" and "its pursuit of nuclear weapons."

"We must all work together to stop Iran's aggression and its pursuit of nuclear weapons. If we stand together we will achieve it. But if we have to we'll stand alone. Iran will not get nuclear weapons. It will not turn Syria into a military base against Israel," Netanyahu told the Jewish Federation of North America's General Assembly.

‘Riyadh begged Tel Aviv to bomb Lebanon’

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani has slammed Riyadh's interference in Lebanon, saying it is "shameful" for a Muslim country to "beg" the Israeli regime to carry out military strikes against the Lebanese nation.

President Rouhani made the remarks at a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

"It is unprecedented in history for a Muslim country to take such measures, and this indicates the immaturity of the individuals, who have come to power in those countries," Press TV quoted the president as saying.

The comments came days after Hezbollah secretary general Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah made similar remarks.

Nasrallah said Riyadh had appealed to the Israeli regime to attack Lebanon in the name of fighting Hezbollah, and was ready to spend billions of dollars to reach such objective.

Earlier this month, Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri announced his resignation in a televised program broadcast from Saudi Arabia, where he is reportedly under arrest.



Rouhani said forcing out the prime minister of Lebanon and even naming a replacement is "open interference" in the

internal affairs of an independent country. "What position are you in and by relying on what authority do you take such

Iran, U.S. have issued \$60b rulings against each other: Zarif

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iran's foreign minister, announced on Wednesday that Iran and the United States have each issued court rulings against the opposite party for a sum of \$60 billion.

"Two years ago, a final ruling of America's Supreme Court led to the freezing of the Islamic Republic of Iran's

properties in one of the American banks during the ninth administration. The Islamic Republic then approved a reciprocal law to entitle the Iranian citizens to file a lawsuit with the Iranian courts against America's criminal acts," Zarif told parliament.

Zarif added that Iran has also lodged a complaint with the International Court of Justice against the U.S.

In relevant remarks in 2016, President Hassan Rouhani announced that Tehran had lodged a complaint with the International Court of Justice in The Hague against an earlier court ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court which authorized the transfer of \$2 billion of Tehran's frozen assets to the families of the victims of a 1983 bombing in Beirut.

Closer Tehran-Moscow ties to benefit  
region, FM says

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Wednesday called for expansion of cooperation in different fields between Tehran and Moscow, saying closer ties would benefit security in the region, Tasnim reported.

In a message to a conference marking five centuries of ties between Iran and Russia, Zarif said a review of the long history of relations ties suggests that the two countries need to broaden and diversify their interaction.

The conference, called "Iran, Russia, Five Centuries of Cooperation", opened in the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI) in Moscow on Wednesday.

The enhancement of bilateral relations, Zarif said, would not only serve the interests of the two nations, but also ensure the security and stability in the Middle East and Central Asia.

He also expressed the hope that academic meetings as well as scientific and cultural cooperation between the two sides would contribute to stronger relations.

Since the Iran nuclear agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), went into force in January 2016, Tehran and Moscow have ramped up efforts to boost their ties in various fields.

The two nations have also formed a strong alliance in the region in recent years, with both supporting the Syrian government against foreign-backed militancy.

Araqchi: JCPOA becoming part of non-proliferation regime

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Wednesday that the 2015 nuclear deal is the "only" experience to settle a "complicated crisis" through dialogue, noting it "has become part of the non-proliferation regime".

The nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, was reached after 10 years of intermittent and two years of intensive talks.

The deal was signed between Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council in July 2015. The UN Security Council adopted a resolution confirming the deal.

"The JCPOA is so strong that Trump [the U.S. president] has not been able to tear it up so far. The reason is that the JCPOA was approved by the UN Security Council," Araqchi said during a conference on arms and security in West Asia in Tehran.

Under the JCPOA Iran agreed to slow down its nuclear activities in exchange for removal of economic and financial sanctions. The UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, is authorized to verify Iran's compliance to the deal.

"The JCPOA is an agreement based on which a country



“Totality of the non-proliferation  
system is endangered without  
the JCPOA”

builds trust on its unwillingness to manufacture nuclear weapon and in return the right of the country to enjoy peaceful nuclear technology is recognized," said Araqchi, the deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs.

Leader pushes for easing woes of quake-hit citizens in Kermanshah

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Tuesday appreciated officials for visiting the quake-hit regions in Kermanshah province, urging serious efforts to ease the sufferings of the affected people especially those who have lost loved ones.

The massive earthquake in the western province of Kermanshah late on Sunday killed more than 430 dead and injured about 10,000.

The quake which measured 7.3 on the Richter scale also completely destroyed about 12 residential buildings. Responsible bodies as well as the military are working against

the time to provide services for the people. Ayatollah Khamenei also said compassion for the affected people must be proven in action.

"These sympathies must strongly continue in the realm of action and help for the people, so that it will ease their pain and woes," he said during a meeting with the heads of the three branches of government and a number of other officials.

Ayatollah Khamenei touched upon the bereavement of the people in the earthquake, saying, "We share this grief with the brave people and valorous guardians of the border

in Kermanshah province."

"Calamity and the loss of loved ones is bitter and difficult, but we hope that God Almighty will bestow his peace and serenity upon the hearts of the bereaved families and delight them with his grace and blessing," Leader. ir quoted Ayatollah Khamenei as saying.

He said the flowing of the "blood of kindness and cooperation in the veins of a Muslim society" is one of the effects of such incidents. "These incidents bring everyone onto the scenes of cooperation and we hope that as a result of this kindness and camaraderie, divine blessings will be bestowed upon the

measures? How long do you think [your] money can serve [your] purposes?" he asked emphatically.

The president also pointed to Saudi Arabia's brutal military campaign against Yemen, asking, "Why has a country, which considers itself to be serving the two sanctuaries [of Mecca and Medina], has come to pressure the innocent and Muslim people of Yemen in such a way?"

Saudi Arabia and its allies launched a military campaign against Yemen in 2015 in order to restore a former pro-Riyadh government there.

More than 12,000 civilians, including women and children, have been killed since the onset of the Saudi-led aggression against Yemen.

"The United Nations has adopted silence in the face of these crimes, and refuses to take a decisive and binding position, and European powers support such crimes as well," the president remarked.

Riyadh has never expressed regret over the invasion and continues its atrocities in Yemen, Rouhani added.

Amano: IAEA has access to all  
locations it needs in Iran

Yukiya Amano, chief of the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency, said on Tuesday that commitments undertaken by Iran under the 2015 nuclear deal are being implemented and the IAEA has so far had access to all locations it has needed to visit in the country.

"The sun does not set on IAEA safeguards," the IAEA website quoted him as saying during his speech at Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs in the eastern U.S. city of Cambridge.

The IAEA carries out stronger inspection activities in Iran and knows more about its nuclear program as a result of the international agreement

known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, he noted.

According to Reuters, the UN atomic watchdog said on Monday in its first report since U.S. President Donald Trump decertified Iranian compliance with the terms that Iran has remained within the main limits on its nuclear activity set by the nuclear deal.

Prior to the recent report, the IAEA had confirmed Iran's compliance to the JCPOA for eight times.

Despite all these confirmations U.S. President Donald Trump on October 13 decertified Iran's compliance to the nuclear deal and asked Congress to decide about the fate of the agreement.

He noted that the JCPOA is something "beyond Iran and even the [West Asia] region".

"The JCPOA has become part of the non-proliferation regime and its importance is beyond the nuclear issue. Totality of the non-proliferation system is endangered without the JCPOA, so the international community supports it," he explained.

Araqchi said that there is no alternative for the nuclear deal.

"If the U.S. [Trump] thinks the JCPOA is the worst deal ever in the U.S. history and seeks to tear it up it (he) should respond whether the Middle East would be a safer place without the JCPOA," he pointed out.

He also said that Iran has been following its anti-hegemonic policies after the conclusion of the nuclear deal in July 2015.

■ **'Middle East biggest market for arms sale'**  
Araqchi said that the Middle East is the biggest market for selling conventional arms.

Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey are the biggest buyers of weaponry, he said.

"Arms trends in West Asia are worrisome," he noted.

Elsewhere, he said that the Zionist regime of Israel's policies are the main reason behind instability in the region.

courageous people of the warrior-raising land of Kermanshah and all of the Iranian nation."

Ayatollah Khamenei described the devastating earthquake as a "divine test" and a stage for the officials to fulfill their responsibilities. "In these two days (Monday and Tuesday), officials, including the respected president, sympathized with the distressed people... and these sympathies must strongly continue in the realm of action and help for the people and reduce the pain, suffering and woes of the people given the cold weather and upcoming difficult cold season."

inside Saudi is not sufficient enough to alarm the world, If the silent genocide happened in Saudi eastern city of Awamiya is not strong enough,

If the ruthless silencing of all dissidents who dare to criticize the unelected royal family is not worrying Saudi allies,

If the official slavery of hundreds of thousands of women and girls migrant workers inside Saudi and their abject living conditions do not speak of the horrible nature of Saudi system, and if the number of Saudi members of Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Nusrah Front and other terrorist organizations around the globe are not reflecting the destructive mindset of Saudis,

then, something is going seriously wrong and then the world should await for even worse human rights violations and even more serious atrocities.

Saudi Arabia needs to be stopped of abusing and ridiculing international fora. Saudi being a partner in the global fight against terrorism and intolerance is blatant mockery of humanity, human rights, justice and peace."

**“Similarities of the atrocities  
committed by the ISIS  
and Saudis like beheading  
are not accidental. They  
are rooted in a common  
ideology and worldview that  
considers the other Moslems  
and non-Moslems infidel  
and heretic.”**



# Leaked: Saudis have ‘plans for official ties with Israel’

A Lebanese newspaper has published a secret undated letter from the House of Saud regime Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman that puts forward a plan to normalize ties with Israel despite “risks” of a public backlash.

Lebanon’s al-Akhbar daily released the correspondence on Tuesday in the wake of reports that Riyadh and Tel Aviv are increasingly tilting toward one another in defiance of strong opposition among the Arabs to such rapprochement.

“I have the honor to submit to you the draft of the plan to establish relations between the kingdom and the State of Israel, based on the strategic partnership agreement with the United States of America, which was discussed with the secretary of state,” the letter reads. Jubeir referred to Israel as a “state” while Saudi Arabia, along with other Arab League states, does not formally recognize the occupying entity.

It, however, warned that the establishment of ties with Israel involves a risk to Saudi Arabia “given the spiritual, historical, and religious status of the Palestinian issue” in public opinion.

“The Kingdom will not take this risk unless it feels the United States’ sincere approach to Iran, which is destabilizing the region,” it went on to say.

The letter also set out a number of conditions for the normalization of relations with Israel:

## ■ Saudi seeks ‘military equivalence’

The letter says any Riyadh-Tel Aviv rapprochement needs “equivalence” between the two sides.

“At the military level, Israel is considered the only country with nuclear weapons in the Middle East.... accordingly, the kingdom must acquire this deterrent or seek to remove Israel’s,” it said.

## ■ Palestine refugees won’t be back

Elsewhere, the Saudis would contribute to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by proposing resettling Palestinian refugees in their host countries rather than returning to their homeland.

The kingdom would also propose for al-Quds (Jerusalem) to be placed under



international control administered by the United Nations.

## ■ Iran ‘common Israel-Saudi target’

In the letter, Jubeir describes Iran as the “main threat” to the region, saying a resolution of Israel-Palestine conflict would help Riyadh and Tel Aviv to focus on the Islamic Republic. When the conflict is settled, Jubeir writes, Saudi Arabia and Israel would pursue their “common goals” regarding Iran.

The two regimes, according to the letter, want tougher United States and international sanctions against Iran over its missile program and human rights issues.

Among other goals are lobbying the six parties to the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran to ensure its strict implementation and capitalizing on Iran’s economic problems to increase

pressure on the country.

The two sides are also concerned over Iran’s influential role in the Middle East, which the letter says should be confronted.

The letter was leaked amid numerous reports of behind-the-scene contacts between Riyadh and Tel Aviv.

In September, Israeli and Arab media reported that a Saudi prince had traveled to Israel and had held consultations with senior Israeli officials over “regional peace.”

A month later, an Israeli official, who was speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP Arabic that Mohammed bin Salman had in fact been the prince who visited Israel in September.

An Israeli official reportedly confirms that a Saudi prince who was widely reported

to have visited Israel in September was Saudi regime Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

An official source at the Saudi Foreign Ministry, however, dismissed the news about bin Salman’s trip.

Back in June, The Times cited unnamed Arab and American sources as saying that Tel Aviv and Riyadh were in clandestine talks to establish official economic ties for the first time since the entity was created.

Additionally, Israel’s Transportation and Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz called on the Saudi regime King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to invite Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu to Riyadh to establish full diplomatic relations.

(Source: Press TV)

## In Myanmar, Tillerson rules out major bans over Rohingya crisis

The United States Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has met with Myanmar’s leader Aung San Suu Kyi, expressing deep concerns about “credible reports” of government-sanctioned violence against Rohingya Muslims.

Tillerson held talks with Suu Kyi on Wednesday in Myanmar’s capital of Naypyidaw during his one-day visit there.

Speaking at a joint press conference with Suu Kyi, Tillerson said that Washington would consider targeted sanctions against individual people if they were found responsible for the violence.

He insisted, however, that he would not advise “broad-based economic sanctions” against the entire country.

“All of that has to be evidence-based,” Tillerson said. “If we have credible information that we believe to be very reliable that certain individuals were responsible for certain acts that we find unacceptable, then targeted sanctions on individuals very well may be appropriate,” he said, diplomatically.

The top U.S. diplomat was also due to meet with Myanmar’s military chief, Min Aung Hlaing, who is in charge of the operations in Rakhine, where government military operations have led to the exodus of more than 600,000 Rohingya Muslims from their country.

A senior U.S. State Department official said on Tuesday

that Tillerson would use the visit to “express concerns over the displacement and violence and insecurity affecting Rohingya populations and other local populations and discuss ways to help Burma (Myanmar) stakeholders implement commitments aimed at ending the crisis and charting productive ways forward.”

Myanmar’s military denies widespread reports of such atrocities, most recently with a statement Monday.

Military authorities claimed they had interviewed thousands of people during a month-long probe into the conduct of troops in Rakhine. While the report said battles with alleged Rohingya-affiliated militants had killed 376 “terrorists,” it also claimed that its military forces had “never shot at the innocent Bengalis” and “there was no death of innocent people.”

The government in Myanmar refuses to recognize the Rohingya Muslim minority in Rakhine as a local ethnic group even though they have lived there for generations.

Meanwhile, Tillerson’s visit was reportedly prompted by bipartisan anger among the U.S. lawmakers about the persisting atrocities in Myanmar.

“In recent weeks, we’ve also witnessed the appalling images of atrocities being committed by the Burmese military against the Rohingya minority,” said Republican Senator Bob

Corker, who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, during a Tuesday hearing to examine the U.S. policy toward Myanmar.

“Hundreds of men and women and children systematically killed. Hundreds of thousands of people fled as their homes burned,” he said.

Another Republican Senator, James Risch of Idaho, said, “There is no difference in our feeling, all of the committee... We all share this frustration. We all share this outrage.”

Moreover, lawmakers in the House and Senate have also recommended a series of new sanctions on Myanmar’s military, which, Corker said, “continues to control key ministries and large swaths of the economy” even after the 2015 election a civilian government.

Suu Kyi’s government has remained almost entirely silent in the face of outcry. On the once occasion that she spoke, she defended the military’s activities.

Corker said, “Her failure to acknowledge the seemingly systematic campaign of brutality by the Burmese military continues to undermine the civilian government and Burma’s democratic transition as a whole.”

He voiced his “shock and dismay at her dismissiveness” of concerns about what has been happening to the Rohingya. (Source: Press TV)

## Turkey’s president meets Qatar’s emir

Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is in Doha to hold talks with Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

During his visit, Erdogan will discuss regional developments and bilateral ties with Sheikh Tamim, a month after a meeting between the two leaders in the Turkish capital, Ankara. This is the Turkish leader’s second visit to the Persian Gulf state since the start of a major diplomatic crisis in the region more than five months ago.

Erdogan arrived in the Qatari capital on Tuesday to attend the third meeting of Turkey-Qatar Supreme Strategic Committee to be held on Wednesday.

Accompanied by Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, his wife and Chief of General Staff General Hulusi Akar among other delegates, Erdogan was welcomed at the Hamad International Airport by Qatar’s Defense Minister Khalid bin Mohammad Al Attiyah, Turkey’s Ambassador to Doha Fikret Ozer and other officials.

The House of Saud regime, Bahrain, the



United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Egypt cut

ties and blockaded Qatar on June 5, accusing

it of supporting “terrorism”, fostering ties

with regional power house Iran and having

military ties with Turkey. Qatar denies the accusations. Qatar’s Emir said on Tuesday that the Saudi regime-led bloc has shunned dialogue and has no desire to end the dispute.

Erdogan, who also visited Qatar in July as part of a regional Persian Gulf tour in a bid to defuse the crisis, has strongly spoken out against the measures applied by the Saudi regime-led group of countries.

In a show of solidarity, Turkey has also sent cargo ships and hundreds of planes loaded with food to help Qatar offset the blockade.

Ankara has a military base in Qatar and deployed more troops in the wake of the crisis.

The closure of the Turkish base was one of 13 demands by the Saudi regime-led group of countries in order to lift their embargo on Qatar.

Erdogan also visited Kuwait on Monday, where he met the Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Kuwait has been leading mediation efforts since the start of the diplomatic rift.

(Source: agencies)

## Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood leader loses appeal against life sentence

The leader of Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood movement, Mohamed Badie, lost his appeal on Wednesday against a life sentence for his role in violent clashes during political turmoil in 2013, judicial sources said.

The judgment by the court of cassation against the sentence, handed out in 2016, cannot be appealed.

Badie, 74, was convicted for his role in violence that broke out in the Suez Canal city of Ismailia days after the army, led by then General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, toppled President Mohamed Morsi, a member of the Brotherhood, following

mass demonstrations against him.

Sisi was elected president the following year.

In the same case, the court on Wednesday also upheld life sentences against seven other people and handed 10-year sentences to 39 and three-year sentences to 19 others.

They were charged with killing three people and attempting to kill 16 others, thuggery, and vandalising public property among other offences, related to the clashes in Ismailia in July 2013.

Authorities outlawed the Brotherhood after Morsi was

ousted, and arrested thousands of its supporters. They also dissolved its Freedom and Justice Party, which Morsi led.

Mass life and death sentences have been common since then in what rights groups call an unprecedented crackdown by the government of Sisi, who promised during campaigning for the presidency to wipe out the Brotherhood.

Badie has also been sentenced to life in eight other cases, only one of which has been confirmed. Two were cancelled, two are pending appeal and three the subject of retrials.

(Source: Reuters)

## ASEAN summit silence on Rohingya ‘an absolute travesty’



After two days of ceremonious meetings, Southeast Asian leaders missed the bulls eye in talks about two major human rights issues affecting their region: Myanmar’s handling of the Rohingya crisis and the Philippines’ bloody campaign against illegal drug traffickers. Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, this year’s Chairman of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), managed to fend off criticism of his “war on drugs”, which has left thousands of people dead.

Duterte spared his Myanmar counterpart, de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi, from having to explain or account for the plight of the 600,000 Rohingya who have been forced to flee the country to Bangladesh.

Driven out by violence from state forces, the displaced Rohingya are languishing at refugee camps. United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres has described their situation as “catastrophic”.

Duterte’s spokesman said two of the 10 ASEAN leaders brought up the Rohingya issue at their plenary meeting on Monday, and that Suu Kyi assured the group that the crisis was being addressed. The spokesman also said that Suu Kyi agreed to accept humanitarian assistance for the Rohingya, which Myanmar had earlier been accused of restricting.

In the penultimate draft of Duterte’s “Chairman’s Statement” - a document issued by the host leader to sum up the results of the group’s discussions - the ASEAN leaders briefly tackled the Rohingya situation as a matter of “disaster resiliency”.

“We ... extended appreciation for the prompt response in the delivery of relief items for the Northern Viet Nam flash floods and landslides victims, the displaced communities in Marawi City, the Philippines, as well as the affected communities in Northern Rakhine State, Myanmar,” the statement read.

There was no other mention of the issue in the 26-page document.

Meanwhile, the document contained two paragraphs on the illegal drug problem and how the member countries have worked together in efforts to solve it. There was, however, no mention of Duterte’s campaign against illegal drugs or its victims.

The document’s segment on human rights tackled neither the Rohingya crisis nor the drug war.

In a media conference to cap off his chairmanship, Duterte blasted Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, one of several world leaders who had bilateral meetings with ASEAN, for bringing up “human rights, extra-judicial killings and rule of law” in his one-on-one with Duterte - even if Trudeau said Duterte was “receptive” and “very cordial” about it.

“It is a personal and official insult. That is why you hear me cursing,” Duterte said. “It angers me. When you are a foreigner, you do not know exactly what is happening to this country.”

A statement released in September by ASEAN foreign ministers on the “humanitarian situation in Rakhine State” foreshadowed the leaders’ silence on the matter.

The statement, issued by Philippines Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, condemned the attacks on Myanmar security forces that triggered the latest spate of violence in Rakhine - but not the ensuing destruction of entire Rohingya communities that forced them to flee en masse.

Malaysia, an ASEAN member, disagreed with Cayetano’s document and disowned it, saying it was not based on “consensus”, a key ASEAN principle.

Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, which comprise ASEAN, have agreed never to say or do anything unless they are in “consensus”, as well as to never interfere in one another’s domestic affairs.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Iraqi forces recapture over dozen villages in Anbar

Iraqi government forces, backed by allied fighters from Popular Mobilization Units, have established control over more than a dozen villages in the country’s western province of Anbar as they are trying to purge the Euphrates Valley, which straddles the Iraqi-Syrian border, from the last remnants of the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group.

The commander of the al-Jazira and Upper Euphrates liberation operation, Lieutenant General Abdul Amir Rashid Yarallah, said on Wednesday that army troops and pro-government fighters - better known by the Arabic name Hashd al-Sha’abi - had completely retaken 13 villages, including al-Jadish, al-Deir, al-Khour, al-Bawadiyah, al-Sammah, al-Baydhah, al-Hassaniyah, and al-Samsiyah over the past three days, and killed more than 38 Daesh extremists, Arabic-language al-Mawazin news agency reported.

Yarallah noted that government forces and their allies had also detonated six car bombs, killed three bombers, and destroyed eight motorcycle bombs as well as 10 vehicles carrying personnel and military hardware to Daesh terrorists.

The senior Iraqi military official further noted that the forces had defused or detonated more than 100 improvised explosive devices during the mentioned period as well.

Yarallah went on to say that military units were continuing to advance towards the town of Rawah, located about 300 kilometers northwest of the capital Baghdad.

On November 11, Iraqi army soldiers and Hashd al-Sha’abi fighters launched a major operation to retake Rawah.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in a statement released on November 8, announced that Daesh had taken about 2,500 families, equivalent to some 10,000 individuals, hostage in Rawah.

(Source: Press TV)



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	88005.9
IFX	996.96

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	41,100 rials
EUR	48,800 rials
GBP	55,150 rials
AED	11,240 rials

Source: Mehrnews.com

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$61.50/b
WTI	\$55.12/b
OPEC Basket	\$61.27/b
Gold	\$1,285.60/oz
Silver	\$17.15/oz
Platinum	\$932.75/oz

Sources: Oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



**Iranian hand-woven carpet exports jump 13% in 6 months**

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — “Iran exported \$153 million of hand-woven carpets during the first half of the present Iranian calendar year (March 21- September 22, 2017), showing an increase of 13 percent in terms of value,” IRIB new quoted Hamid Kargar, the head of Iran’s National Carpet Center, as saying on Wednesday.

Iran’s exports of hand-woven carpets in the past Iranian calendar year 1395 (ending March 20, 2017) stood at \$359 million, he added.



**Iranian banks’ 7-month loans to economic sector up 12.6% on year**

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) announced that the Iranian banks provided domestic economic sectors with above 3.13 trillion rials (about \$76.2 million) of loans during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (ending on October 22, 2017), which shows a 12.6 percent increase compared to the same time span in the preceding year, IRIB news reported on Wednesday.

Working capital loans paid to different economic sectors was above 1.96 trillion rials (about \$47.6 million) accounting for 62.8 percent of the total provided facilities in the said period, registering an 8 percent increase from the previous year.

Boeing beats out Airbus for \$27b order from FlyDubai

Boeing Co. secured an order valued at \$27 billion for 737 Max jets from discount carrier FlyDubai, hitting back at rival Airbus SE’s record \$50 billion deal.



A FlyDubai Boeing 737 MAX8 during the 15th Dubai Air Show on Nov. 12.

Amid a surprise order flourish at the Dubai Air Show, the state-owned budget airline signed an agreement for 175 firm orders, plus an additional 50 options, FlyDubai said Wednesday in a statement. The deal is a blow to Airbus, which was expected to split the order with Boeing.

FlyDubai, which closely cooperates with long-haul giant Emirates, currently has an all Boeing fleet. With the latest announcement, the carrier has 320 planes on order.

(Source: Bloomberg)

UK employment falls in third quarter, pay growth lags inflation again

The number of people in work in Britain fell by the most in more than two years in the three months to September, a latest sign of weakness in Britain’s Brexit-bound economy, official data showed on Wednesday.

At the same time, the inactivity rate - a measure of people not in work and not seeking a job - rose by the most in nearly eight years, the Office for National Statistics said.

The data showed the unemployment rate held at a four-decade low of 4.3 percent as the number of people in employment fell by 14,000 and pay growth remained much slower than inflation.

The ONS said workers’ total earnings, including bonuses, rose by an annual 2.2 percent in the three months to September, compared with 2.3 percent in the three months to August.

That was weaker than the latest 3.0 percent reading of British consumer price inflation.

Economists taking part in a Reuters poll had expected wage growth of 2.1 percent.

(Source: Reuters)

Pakistan due to finalize FTA with Iran next week

**1 →** Last year the trade between the two countries crossed the level of \$1 billion and this year during April-September total trade between the two countries was \$660 million which is a very good one. We hope that this will increase a lot.”

“The \$5 billion bilateral target was set last year to bring this trade to level of \$5 billion by 2021. We hope that within the next four years by 2021 when we have free trade agreement and all the things in place this target is achievable and even we can achieve more than this”, he added.

Referring to his government’s measures for facilitation of trade with Iran, the counselor said: “We have brought this delegation here and we have today meetings with Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Karachi Chamber to have direct contact with the business community and to get the direct input what sort of facilitation is required by them [Iranian businessmen] and what kind of facilitation Pakistani business community can offer. So we can remove the problems and facilitate in any way.”

“And we have also pointed out many things to our Ministry of Commerce and also other trade authorities to provide different facilitations and this will be provided”, he added.

**■ Pakistan sees Iran one of its main business partners**

Elsewhere in his remarks, Nazar Muhammad said: “Pakistan considers Iran its one of the most important business partners and we are doing all of the best to improve the business relations.”

“I am thankful to you [Iranian delegation] and all of the delegations that are here on our invitation and we are very honored to have all you here and your participation is a very positive sign”, he noted.

“All the business community here have lot



of demand that Iranian businessmen should come here”, the counselor highlighted.

“And as you know this is one of the biggest exhibitions that Pakistan has arranged. The last exhibition took place in 2015 and there are delegations from almost 50-55 countries from all over the world. The participation is very impressive. There are almost 900-1000 delegates that have come from foreign countries”, he further explained.

**■ Absence of banking channel main barrier for trade**

Nazar Muhammad mentioned absence of banking channel as the major barrier for bilateral trade and said: “There is no banking channel and we are trying our best to resume this banking channel, because without this it is not easy with the businessmen to conduct their trade. When there will be banking chan-

nel it will easily increase trade many folds.”

He went on to say: “Then the tariffs are very high. Pakistani business community says that tariffs are very high in Tehran, lots of certifications like certification from health ministry are required and they have to get those certifications.”

**■ Mutual recognition agreement expected**

“And we are also now trying to sign an agreement which is called mutual recognition agreement. It means that if there is some certification granted by Pakistani authorities to its businessmen it will be accepted by Iran and similarly if Iranian authorities have given some certifications it will be accepted by Pakistan. We are also negotiating this agreement during the meeting of free trade agreement. So this will also facilitate trade”,

Iran building cement factory in Ghana

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The ground was laid for a \$30-million cement factory, jointly funded by Iran and Ghana, in Dawa Industrial Enclave in the African country.

According to Ghana News Agency, Iranian Agricultural Minister Mahmoud Hojjati and Ghana’s Vice President Mahamadu Bawumia

attended the ground breaking ceremony of the project on Tuesday.

As reported, Iran owns 90 percent shares with Ghana owning the rest in the project that is expected to produce some 600,000 tons of premium cement annually.

The project is started following an MOU signed between the two countries during the

Ghanaian vice president’s visit to Iran earlier this year. The factory is expected to be completed in two years.

Hojjati, who led a delegation attending the sixth session of the Iran-Ghana Joint Committee meeting in Ghana, expressed optimism that the project would boost the bilateral ties between the two countries.

he further announced.

He also said: “We have already signed an agreement that is preferential trade agreement (PTA). It was signed in 2006 and under this agreement we have included 338 items from Iran and 309 items from Pakistan. So there are almost 650 items which can take place in preferential trade agreement which means tariffs will be reduced by both countries to each other but actually from last year we see from data there are only few number of items that are taking place.”

“In last six months we had only eight items that have gone to Iran and maximum is rice. Rice is almost 65 percent of our total export, similarly Iran’s exports are considered in only 10-15 items, so we have to look into expand it to diversify it”, he added.

“With this diversification we need to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers and then trade increases not only in volume but also in diversification and it can be done”, he concluded

**■ Many Pakistani delegations visit Iran last year**

Many different delegations from Pakistan including trade delegations have visited Iran during the past year period, Nazar Muhammad said, adding: “One delegation was from Lahore Chamber of Commerce, one from Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REP), and delegations from Pakistan-Iran Joint Chamber of Commerce that visited twice in the last year. Then the joint economic committee meeting was also held in April 2017 in Tehran.”

In the end, the Pakistani counselor said: “Once again thank you for coming here and also from our delegation from Iran. They are very much encouraged with this very much positive gesture and we hope that such delegations will be visiting both countries again.”

Bawumia for his part noted that the project, which reflects the economic dimension of the relations between Iran and Ghana, would boost the nation’s infrastructural drive, create jobs and help make the price of cement competitive.

Bawumia expressed hope that there would be more mutually beneficial cooperation ventures between Ghana and Iran.

Austria calls for increasing trade volume with Iran

**ECONOMY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Austrian ambassador in Tehran expressed his country’s willingness for increasing the volume of trade with Iran, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported on Wednesday.

Stefan Scholz made the remarks in a meeting with Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, head of ICCIMA in Tehran.

In the meeting, Shafeie mentioned Iran and Austria’s good economic relations, saying that ICCIMA is planning on establishing a joint chamber with Austria in near future.

The official further added that a



delegation comprising all Iranian chambers’ heads is going to visit Austria in near future, a unique and important event which indicates Iran’s willingness for expansion of trade ties with Austria.

Janet Yellen admits the Fed can be confusing the public with its many voices

Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen said Tuesday that one of the challenges for the central bank is how its multiple members communicate with the public.

“This really is one of the challenges of our system,” Yellen told a European Central Bank panel in Frankfurt.

“We have a very large committee, 19 people,” she said. “We’ve had a kind of democratization of monetary policy that began really under my predecessor.”

The discussion panel — which also featured central bank chiefs from Japan, the U.K. and the euro zone — focused on how central banks communicate with the public and the markets about what they are doing to ensure price stability. Yellen said that individual speeches from committee members, mainly before a policy decision meeting, can be a hurdle for the Federal Reserve.

“Individuals should be explaining in their speeches, elaborating what’s on the (Fed’s decision) statement and explaining what we have agreed upon. We agreed that having done that, individuals can go out and explain their individual perspectives,” she said.

However, she added: “I would say that guidance hasn’t been totally faithfully followed, although many of my colleagues do try to do that, and the press tends to pick up on differences, (which is) particularly difficult when we have an upcoming policy decision.”

Some members are traditionally more hawkish than others, and they could suggest with their speeches a stronger path to normalization of monetary policy, and vice-versa, creating potentially incorrect expectations for investors, who trade according to the path of monetary policy.

Yellen admitted that it is hard to find a solution to this problem.

“Probably we will never, given our structure and size, be able to deal with this totally effectively,” Yellen told the audience.

“This is a work in progress,” she added.

The Federal Reserve is expected to increase interest rates next month. In October, minutes from the bank’s last policy meeting showed that officials saw the U.S. economy expanding at a steady pace, which increases the chances of another rate hike before the end of the year.

Japan’s GDP grows for 7 straight quarters, outlook remains solid

Japan’s economy shrugged off a consumer spending dip in the third quarter to post the longest period of uninterrupted growth in more than a decade, showing strong fundamentals.

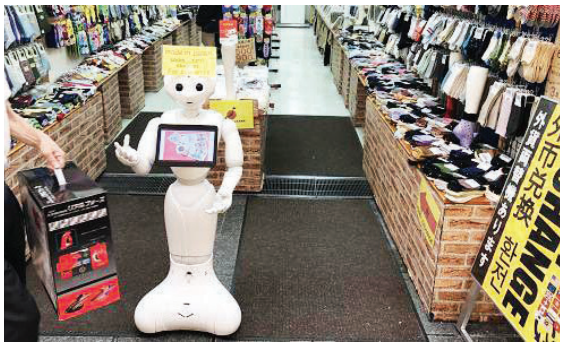
The economy expanded at a 1.4 percent annualized rate in July-September on strong exports and slightly above the median estimate for annualized growth of 1.3 percent. That followed revised annualized growth of 2.6 percent in April-June.

Weakness in consumer spending is expected to be temporary because the economy is near near full employment, which should bolster domestic consumption in the future.

Rising capital expenditure and exports are also expected to keep the economy growing, which should ease some concerns about sluggish inflation.

Gross domestic product (GDP) grew 0.3 percent compared to the previous quarter, which matched the median estimate and followed a 0.6 percent quarter-on-quarter expansion in April-June, Cabinet Office data showed on Wednesday.

The results show that Japan’s economy has grown for the



seventh straight quarter, the longest period of expansion since an eight-quarter run from April-June 1999 to January-March 2001.

External demand — or exports minus imports — was the



Earlier this month, President Donald Trump selected Fed Governor Jerome Powell to succeed Yellen when her term at the helm expires in February.

(Source: cnbc)

biggest reason for expansion, adding 0.5 percent to growth. Negative external demand subtracted a revised 0.2 percentage point from GDP growth in April-June.

Private consumption, which accounts for about two-thirds of GDP, fell 0.5 percent from the previous quarter, more than the median estimate of a 0.3 percent contraction to mark the first decline since October-December 2015.

Capital expenditure rose 0.2 percent in July-September from the previous quarter, less than the median estimate for a 0.3 percent increase.

Japan’s government will announce a package of economic measures by year-end aimed at increasing investment in skills training and raising productivity.

This long run of growth should encourage the Bank of Japan to stick with the current monetary easing framework, given its argument that inflationary pressure will percolate through the economy as long as growth is on track.

(Source: Reuters)



# OPEC approaches meeting without clear plan on how to extend cuts

Fifteen days from now, nations that pump more than half the world's oil gather in Vienna to discuss extending the production cuts that helped lift prices to two-year highs. The outcome is far from certain.

Russia, which alongside Saudi Arabia was the architect of the historic cooperation between crude producers, is said to be unconvinced that a decision is needed so soon before the deal expires at the end of March. While OPEC Secretary-General Mohammad Barkindo sees no opposition in principle to continuing the supply curbs, the extension could be as short as three months or as long as nine.

There's good reason for doubts to creep into the deliberations. While forecasters agree that the production cuts have depleted bloated fuel stockpiles in recent months, there's huge divergence in forecasts for 2018. Brent crude is finally trading above \$60 a barrel, but it's unclear whether that's down to an improving market or the huge increase in speculative bets.

OPEC and Russia's deal doesn't expire for four months, but procrastinating in a volatile market with high expectations carries some risks.

"Any postponement in deciding a supply-cut extension, or even a disappointment relative to the duration of an extension, can easily lead to unraveling of speculative length on futures and a price correction," said Harry Tchilinguirian, head of commodity-markets strategy at BNP Paribas SA.

Preparations for the Nov. 30 meeting in the Austrian capital begin one week earlier, with a workshop to discuss the outlook for shale oil followed by the meeting of the



Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' Economic Commission Board, said one delegate. This panel of representatives from member countries, which discusses the market before every ministerial meeting, will focus on forecasts for demand this winter, including consideration of the International Energy Agency's estimate for weaker-than-expected fuel consumption, another delegate said.

## ■ Moscow meeting

Speculation has grown that the cuts would continue beyond expiry, potentially to the end of 2018, after Russian President Vladimir Putin signaled that he's open to such a move. Yet, he also said there had been no decision in Moscow.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak, who met with bosses of the nation's major oil companies in Moscow on Wednesday, has previously said that there won't necessarily be a decision this month whether to extend the cuts. It's hard to see if such a move is needed so long before the deal's expiry, he said on Nov. 2. Moscow also dragged its feet at the OPEC meeting a year ago, keeping the market guessing until the last moment about whether it would join the cuts.

Cooperation with OPEC is "fruitful," Tatneft PJSC Chief Executive Officer Nail Maganov told reporters after the meeting with Novak. Market monitoring and discussions need to continue, said Gazprom Neft PJSC

CEO Alexander Dyukov.

The leaders of Russia's largest producers, who didn't attend the meeting with Novak, have previously voiced concerns about extending the deal. Lukoil PJSC's billionaire CEO Vagit Alekperov said last month that the deal should end if oil prices reach \$60 a barrel. Rosneft PJSC boss Igor Sechin has warned that growing U.S. shale output is undermining their efforts.

## ■ Diverging forecasts

OPEC's own forecasts could give members reason to think a full extension to the end of 2018 is unnecessary. With predictions for strong demand and a more modest expansion in production from non-members, inventories would decline at a rapid pace of 670,000 barrels a day through the year if the group and its allies keep supplies constrained.

"The latest OPEC figures could be interpreted as weakening the case for such a deal to already be agreed at the upcoming meeting," Vienna-based consultant JBC Energy GmbH said in a report.

Yet the IEA sees demand for OPEC's crude next year at 32.4 million barrels a day, 1 million lower than the organization's own estimate and slightly lower than its output last month. If the agency is right, fuel stockpiles would start to expand again in the first half of 2018 and prices could fall below \$60 again.

"To me, OPEC producing around October's 32.5 million barrels a day through 2018 just doesn't cut it, if regaining historical stock levels is the goal," said David Fyfe, head of market research and analysis at Geneva-based commodities trader Gunvor Group Ltd. "So, superficially at least, there's a rationale for further cuts." (Source: Bloomberg)

## Russia hesitates on length of OPEC oil cuts extension



OPEC has yet to convince Russia that it's necessary to reach an agreement to extend oil-output cuts at a Vienna meeting later this month, as officials and oil bosses in Moscow still haven't decided how long the output deal should last.

The world's largest energy exporter still believes it's too early to announce anything this month, two people with knowledge of matter said. Another issue is a duration of the extension, with options including an additional three months of cuts being considered.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its partners, including Russia, are meeting in Vienna on Nov. 30 to decide whether to prolong the deal to curb oil production beyond its scheduled expiry in March. Speculation has grown that they'll prolong the measures to the end of 2018 after Russian President Vladimir Putin signaled last month that he's open to such a move. Yet, he also said there had been no decision in Moscow.

Novak told reporters on Tuesday that

the future of the pact with OPEC will be discussed with companies, without elaborating further. Lukoil PJSC's billionaire Chief Executive Officer Vagit Alekperov said last month that the deal should end if oil prices reach \$60 a barrel -- below current levels -- while Rosneft PJSC CEO Igor Sechin has warned that U.S. shale output is undermining their efforts.

OPEC and allied oil producers should extend their production cuts beyond March to help re-balance the market, the United Arab Emirates said Tuesday. The group sees no opposition to prolonging the deal which helped benchmark Brent crude jump to a two-year high of more than \$60 a barrel in the past month. Discussions are now focusing on the duration of the extension, according to OPEC Secretary-General Mohammad Barkindo.

The producers won't necessarily decide this month whether to extend the cuts, Novak said earlier this month. It's hard to see if such a move is necessary so long before the deal's expiry, he said. (Source: Bloomberg)

## Sudan in talks with foreign oil firms to boost crude production



Sudan has discussed the development of its oil industry following the removal of many U.S. sanctions on the country—including on oil and petrochemical industries—with Russia's Lukoil and with other firms from Europe and Canada, Sudan's Oil Minister Abdul Rahman Osman said.

"There are many companies that are not committed yet, but they have sent emissaries or they are already negotiating in order to see their potential in coming into Sudan," Osman said on the sidelines of the Abu Dhabi Petroleum Exhibition & Conference (ADIPEC), as quoted by Reuters.

According to Sudan's minister, companies are interested in developing onshore projects as well as offshore natural gas projects in the Red Sea.

Lukoil is in talks for new projects in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, and Sudan, the Russian company's CEO Vagit Alekperov said at the same ADIPEC event on Monday.

Alekperov was planning to hold talks with Sudan's oil minister regarding cooperation in the African country.

"He also asked to meet and discuss cer-

tain projects in the territory of Sudan, which has not been viewed before by the company as interesting for our investments," Russia's news agency TASS quoted Alekperov as saying, referring to the Sudanese oil minister.

On October 12, the U.S. lifted a 20-year-old trade embargo on Sudan, removing many companies from the list of specially designated entities, including the petroleum sector. The lifting of the oil-related sanctions is seen as a much-needed impetus to the economy of Sudan, which remains one of the poorest countries.

Sudan's economy is set to recover gradually following the lifting of the U.S. sanctions, Sudanese Finance Minister Mohamed Othman Rukabi said right after the removal of the embargo.

"Lifting the sanctions leads to increasing growth and production rates, but in order to benefit from this chance we must bring down inflation, increase exports, decrease imports and government spending, lift subsidies on basic goods and attract foreign investment," Reuters quoted Rukabi as saying at an event last month.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## Oil prices slide after IEA casts doubt over demand outlook

Oil prices slipped for the fourth day in a row on Wednesday on a gloomy outlook for oil demand growth from the International Energy Agency and worries that data expected later in the day would show U.S. output rising, undermining OPEC cuts.

Brent crude futures were down 72 cents at \$61.49 per barrel at 1020 GMT, having fallen by 1.5 percent on Tuesday, its largest one-day drop in a month.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was at \$55.12 per barrel, down 58 cents.

The Brent price has now shed nearly 5 percent in value since hitting its highest since mid-2015 last week. Losses were compounded on Tuesday after an unexpectedly gloomy global demand outlook from the Paris-based IEA.

"Yesterday's drop had to do with the world energy outlook, which was to me a bit of a surprise," said Hans van Cleef, senior energy economist at ABN Amro.

The IEA on Tuesday cut its oil demand growth forecast by 100,000 barrels per day (bpd) for both 2017 and 2018 to an estimated 1.5 million bpd and 1.3 million bpd respectively.

The demand slowdown could mean world oil consumption may not, as many expect,



breach 100 million bpd next year, while supplies are likely to exceed that level.

The IEA report countered a regular market update from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, which just a day earlier said 2018 would see a strong rise in

oil demand.

Van Cleef said data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration expected at 1530 GMT could weigh on prices if it confirms the rise in U.S. crude inventories reported by the American Petroleum Institute on Tuesday.

## Iraq oil revenue not enough for sustainable development

Oil revenues still are not high enough to allow the Iraqi government to fund the reconstruction of the country, according to Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi.

"Oil prices are not at the required level to be used for sustainable development," state TV quoted al-Abadi as Iraq proclaimed itself victorious earlier this year after a three-year, hard-fought war against ISIS. The victory freed up some money—but not enough—for reconstructing the nation after almost 15 years after the demise of dictator Saddam Hussain and the fall of his regime.

The oil price crash of 2014 has made it difficult for fossil-fuel dependent countries to provide key government services to its citizens, and Iraq was not immune. In Iraq, years of financial mismanagement and domestic conflict exacerbated existing civil governance issues.

Just over a month has passed since the Kurdish referendum, which resulted in a near-unanimous vote for the Kurdistan Regional Government to secede from Iraq. Baghdad has not accepted the results of the vote, moving instead to deploy its military to secure control of the Kirkuk oilfields, which, though located in northern Iraq, do not lie in areas legally allotted to the KRG. The political consequences of the referendum have played out in a recent deal with Iran.

With the Kurdistan autonomous region heavily dependent on oil revenues, chances are the government will seek to come to a mutually beneficial agreement with the central government in Baghdad.

The region's Prime Minister, Nechirvan Barzani has acknowledged the adverse effect that the Iraqi offensive has had on the region's oil income, saying it had fallen to less than 50 percent of what it used to be before October 16, when the offensive was launched. (Source: oilprice.com)

## Australia's BHP sees 500MW solar and storage potential in disused mines

Australian mining giant BHP has identified legacy mine sites in the US alone that could provide more than 500MW of wind, solar and storage capacity, as part of a review that could see a global push into renewable energy technologies.

The study of BHP's North American assets was conducted by the US-based renewable energy think tank, the Rocky Mountain Institute, as part of its "Sunshine for Mines" research project.

The program suggests that disused mines could be an ideal site for placing large-scale solar, or wind projects, as well as storage, and BHP had engaged RMI to look at its North American portfolio of legacy sites for renewable development.

"Using the methodology, RMI identified significant potential for redevelopment and a clear subset of sites with a collective potential of over 0.5 GW," RMI says in its report.

For most of the sites, because of their location, solar PV emerged as the largest opportunity, with a few being well suited for wind development.

"Various storage technologies were also explored and, in some cases, recommended. The opportunities in the subset were ranked by overall value according to the variables assessed via the scorecard system. This helped BHP prioritize activities and take action on the most attractive opportunities."

RenewEconomy contacted BHP for further comment, but did not get a reply before publication.

The use of old mine sites for renewable energy and storage projects is not new, although it is only just taking off.

In Queensland, Genex proposes a large solar farm and pumped hydro storage in the old Kidston gold mine, and in Victoria Nectar Farms is proposing a significant battery storage array, along with a neighboring wind farm, on the old Stawell gold mine.

And in South Australia, Liberty OneSteel, the new owners of the Whyalla steel works, is looking at a pumped hydro installation in a disused iron ore mine as part of its 1GW investment in solar, storage and demand management to turn its operations green with energy.

BHP is also keeping a close eye on solar and storage, entering into a partnership for the development of the Lakeland solar and storage — the first instance where the two technologies are couple on the grid in Australia — which is due to come on line soon.

BHP has also been mulling opportunities for using solar and storage at its remote operating mine sites as an alternative to diesel or gas, following on the success of its rivals in projects such as Weipa in north Queensland and the Sandfire copper mine in West Australia. (Source: reneweconomy.com.au)

## OPEC may expand to include allied oil producers, UAE energy minister says

United Arab Emirates Minister for Energy Suhail al-Mazroui said Tuesday there is "definitely" an appetite for non-OPEC members to join the 14-member cartel.

When asked whether the non-OPEC countries currently complying with the global supply cuts could eventually become official members of the cartel, al-Mazroui replied: "There is definitely a willingness and a wish to expand OPEC."

"It would have been difficult to try to rebalance the market alone and so I think there is a rationale for this group to stay together... and maybe even expand," he said at the Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition Conference (ADIPEC).

OPEC members are reportedly forming a consensus around extending by nine months their production cutting deal with other crude exporters. That would prolong the agreement among OPEC, Russia and nine other oil-producing nations to keep 1.8 million barrels a day off the market through the whole of next year.

The exporters reached the deal last December and have already extended the agreement once through March 2018.

At ADIPEC on Monday, OPEC Secretary General Mohammed Barkindo lauded the compliance of OPEC and non-OPEC nations to the global supply cut deal. He also said he expected all 24 OPEC and non-OPEC countries to participate in the cartel's upcoming meeting.

OPEC and other non-OPEC producers are poised to meet on November 30 in Vienna, Austria, to decide on oil output policy.

The price of oil collapsed from near \$120 a barrel in June 2014 due to weak demand, a strong dollar and booming U.S. shale production. OPEC's reluctance to cut output was also seen as a key reason behind the fall. But, the oil cartel soon moved to curb production — along with other oil producing nations — in late 2016.

Brent crude traded at around \$62.95 a barrel Tuesday morning, down 0.33 percent, while U.S. crude was around \$56.58 a barrel, up 0.32 percent. (Source: CNBC)



## Deeper European integration is desirable but difficult

By Tony Barber

Two recent episodes illustrate why discussions about the best way forward for the EU are so vexed. Beata Szydlo, Poland's prime minister, proposed that national parliaments should have the right to suspend the application of EU laws, if a majority of other states outvote their governments. Meanwhile, Finland's government opposed a European Commission plan to proceed with a common deposit insurance scheme, on the grounds that risks in the banking sector are not yet under control. The Polish proposal underlines the suspicion with which some countries in central and eastern Europe will view any Franco-German push for deeper EU integration perceived as trampling on their sovereignty or diminishing their influence. The Finnish objections highlight that, even in the 19-nation eurozone, there exist profound differences over how to strengthen the currency union that almost fell apart in 2010-12.



Germany's Angela Merkel meets fellow EU leaders.

Just before a Brussels summit of EU leaders in June, Donald Tusk, president of the European Council, which groups national governments, wrote: "We are witnessing the return of the EU rather as a solution, not a problem." In some respects, he was right.

### ■ Europe's refugee and Migrant crisis

The eurozone is no longer in a state of emergency, and economic conditions are relatively benign. Europe's refugee and migrant crisis is, to an extent, subsiding. Above all, electoral contests in the Netherlands, France and Germany — though less so Austria — have seen the defeat of rightwing populism and other anti-establishment forces. Brexit, or the UK's expected departure from the EU in March 2019, has reinforced a sense of unity among the remaining 27 states.

Yet in other respects there is a danger of complacency. Future turmoil in the eurozone remains distinctly possible. The area's stabilization has rested too much on unorthodox measures applied by the European Central Bank. National banking systems are still overexposed to sovereign debt. Economic growth benefits millions, but leaves millions of others unemployed or struggling to cope in low-paid jobs. Proposals to address these weaknesses tend to divide wealthy, northern European creditor states from less wealthy, southern debtors.

As for refugees and migrants, the EU's solutions consist largely of ad hoc efforts to stem inflows by tightening Europe's external borders and paying off Turkey and states in north and sub-Saharan Africa. Within the EU, many governments prefer to operate their own controls rather than pursue common policies. Here the dividing line is often between western and eastern Europe, but also among some western states. In the largest sense, the reason why the EU finds it hard to overcome its multiple challenges is that bitter disputes divide not just national governments but the societies of each member state. Emmanuel Macron, France's president, contends that "people fall into two almost equal camps: supporters of an open society, and those who advocate a closed society". In such circumstances, it makes no sense to recommend deeper integration for all 27 states. Take defense.

### ■ Common EU policy

Proposals for a common EU policy run into the problem that some northern and eastern countries regard NATO as their core security guarantee and other countries are neutral. Any defense and security initiatives that omitted the UK, Europe's leading military power next to France, would look limited in scope.

Yet deeper integration among the eurozone states is desirable. It is the only way to put the monetary union on a firmer footing. The reservations of Finland — and Germany — about how to complete the banking union are understandable, but this project must not be left to drift. Likewise the proposed capital markets union.

### A 'multi-speed' union would put the eurozone on firmer footing.

By contrast, it would be better to leave plans for a eurozone "finance minister" or "common budget" for another day, rather than launch them in a timid, symbolic and largely irrelevant way. Most of the latest ideas for closer integration focus on a "multi-speed Europe". A core group or groups of countries would press ahead with common policies in specific areas, leaving the door open to others to join if and when they feel ready. This could be combined with returning some powers to national governments, as Poland wishes, provided that the framework binding countries in the EU single market and upholding other essential rules remains intact. However, even this mixture of deeper integration and a partial reassertion of national powers would not guarantee a happy future for the EU. For far too long Europe's leaders have paid mere lip-service to bringing the EU closer to the lives of ordinary citizens. Macron's proposal to elect some European Parliament members on pan-EU political party lists may be a step in the right direction. But the test will be whether, if introduced, it reverses the decline in voter turnout that has marked every election to the assembly since 1979.

In the 1950s, European integration was an elite project, necessarily so. As Europe enters the 2020s, this will most definitely not be enough.

(Source: FT)

# This may be the beginning of the end of the Saudi monarchy

By Ali Al-Ahmed

The Tiger is dead. Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr ("nimr" is Arabic for "tiger") was executed by the Saudi government for speaking out against absolute monarchy and pushing for people's participation in governing themselves. The mass executions of 47 people last week marked a turning point that will perhaps be a harbinger of what this year will look like for Saudi Arabia.

The timing of the executions was carefully chosen and was aimed at silencing domestic anger over economic decline and the failure of regional policies. The truth is that the Saudi government is on the ropes.

First, there is a Saudi-Yemen quagmire of a war, which has burnt billions of dollars and made the Saudi government look pretty weak and unable to defeat the army of the poorest Arab state — even with a 10-country coalition and, indirectly via arms sales, American and British help.

Next, in Syria, the Saudis kicked and screamed to have the U.S. topple President Bashar Assad's regime on their behalf but U.S. President Barack Obama did not, even when his alleged red line of chemical weapons was crossed. Then came the Russian intervention that put an end to the Saudi project. That was symbolized by the Russian killing of the Saudi-backed leader of Jaish al-Islam on Dec. 25.

Finally, there is Iraq and its progress in defeating the so-called Islamic State — albeit at a slow pace. The Saudis tried for years to create instability in Iraq to prevent the country from emerging as a Shiite-led government that represents its Sunni population. This explains the Saudi policy of allowing thousands of Saudi men to travel to Iraq to fight Iraqi and American troops and bring death and destruction to the country. A stable Iraq is a natural economic and political competitor.

And then there is Iran, Saudi's long-time regional nemesis, who is now coming back to the international arena with more than \$100 billion from frozen assets and a warmer relationship with the West. The Saudis have tried for years to get the U.S. to bomb Iran on their behalf but it did not work. The kingdom mounted one of its most aggressive diplomatic campaigns ever to block the P5+1 nuclear deal with Iran but to no avail; it was possibly their worst political defeat of 2015.

### ■ Grim reality

Against the background of this grim reality, the Saudi government needed to show strength to its domestic audiences while quickly running out of options to do so. They opted for mass executions as a tactic designed to distract and deflect.

The people are becoming increasingly disillusioned and angry with their government's domestic and economic policies.

The executions came four days after the



Saudi Arabia's King Salman chats with his son and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

## The fate of Arab governments who have executed Shiite religious leaders is haunting. Nearly all of them have collapsed.

publication of the abysmal 2016 state budget, which is smaller than the previous year now that the low oil prices and the Yemen war have taken a financial toll. According to the Saudi Ministry of Finance, oil revenues in 2015 have shrunk by 23 percent compared to 2014. This means that oil revenues will decline even further in 2016, as oil prices are set to slide down with the Iranian oil coming back to an already saturated market.

Many in the kingdom were dismayed by the budget announcement as they expected King Salman bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud to fulfill promises of economic prosperity he made at his coronation last January. The people are becoming increasingly disillusioned and angry with their government's domestic and economic policies, and the government's foreign policies are slowly becoming less popular as well.

### ■ Greater pressure

Furthermore, the Saudi riyal, currently pegged to the dollar, is facing greater pressure and would most likely be floated and lose value. This will bring unprecedented inflation and greater domestic grumbling, considering that the country imports most of its food and consumer goods.

After his execution, Nimr is emerging as an icon to the Shiite Arab community.

The aftermath of the executions gave the Saudi government some breathing room

after a mob ransacked their embassy in Tehran. The Iranians gave the Saudis what they wanted on a golden plate. The Saudi government's Sunni political base is now united behind it against Iran and is licking its economic wounds. As the Arab proverb goes, "There is no greater sound than the sound of battle." The government believes it can rally the people — mostly its Sunni base — behind it, while effectively silencing dissent by framing its confrontation with Iran in sectarian terms, something the Saudi government did successfully in the 1980s.

That's why the Saudi regime will resort to increased reliance on its Wahhabi religious clerics to endorse its domestic and regional policies. This was clear in King Salman's reception with all the top Wahhabi clerics on Wednesday. The country, it seems, will be receiving a greater dose of religion. If you cannot give them money, feed them religion. This has worked well in the past, but it will prove harder now, as the population is much more educated and connected and has greater expectations from their government.

A Saudi-Iran spat means a rise of sectarian tension, which will victimize the Saudi Shiites first and foremost. But after his execution, Nimr is emerging as an icon to the Shiite Arab community. There may be as many as four million Shiites in Saudi Arabia, and they dominate the largest Saudi

region, which is also where the majority of the country's oil fields are.

The fate of Arab governments who have executed Shiite religious leaders is haunting. Nearly all of them have collapsed.

The U.S. did not condemn the execution of Nimr but it did send an important message by calling him a political activist and a religious cleric and by including his full name in a White House readout of Obama's phone call with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi. This shift may have been related to its balancing act between its current Saudi ally and its emerging Iranian partner.

The fate of Arab governments who have executed Shiite religious leaders is haunting. Nearly all of them have collapsed. The Saddam Hussein regime executed Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr. Many believe Muammar Gaddafi killed Moussa al-Sadr, which Gaddafi and his subordinates denied. Ali Abdulla Saleh had government forces kill Hussein al-Houthi. And Mohamed Morsi of Egypt was overthrown 10 days after the killing of Sheikh Hassan Shehata.

Will Nimr's execution curse the Saudi monarchy? Only time will tell but certainly the roar of the tiger remains loud and will create greater difficulties for the monarchy as a new generation of Saudi Shiites now have a martyr of their own.

(Source: Huffington Post)

## President Trump, please read the Constitution

When he started his long-shot bid for the White House in 2015, Donald Trump appeared to know as much about the Constitution as you might expect of any real estate developer slash reality show host slash beauty pageant judge.

One year after his election — and almost 10 months after he swore on a Bible to preserve, protect and defend that founding document — it's not clear he knows much more, or aspires to.

Instead, throughout his candidacy and presidency, Trump has treated the Constitution less as a guiding light than as an inconvenient hindrance.

"His idea of the presidency is, he was elected and he can do whatever he wants," said Corey Brettschneider, a professor of political science at Brown University and author of "The Oath and the Office: A Guide to the Constitution for Future Presidents," which will be published in 2018. "Presidents usually regard the oath as a set of legally

binding principles that they abide by," Brettschneider said. "Trump tends to think of things in terms of real estate law — ways to get around legal requirements rather than enforcing and promoting them. That's scary, because we rely on a president to espouse the norms of the Constitution."

Sometimes Trump's constitutional illiteracy is amusing, like the time he told a group of Republican senators that he wanted to protect "Article XII," which doesn't exist. More often it's alarming. He has shown disdain for the separation of powers by repeatedly attacking the

### Throughout his candidacy and presidency, Trump has treated the Constitution less as a guiding light than as an inconvenient hindrance.

## Are the military about to oust Mugabe in Zimbabwe?

By John Campbell

The era of coups in Africa is supposed to be over.

Nevertheless, one may be underway in Zimbabwe against the regime of nonagenarian Robert Mugabe and his wife, Grace.

Army Chief General Constantino Chiwenga, along with ninety senior military officers, gave a news conference on Monday in which he said that the army will step in unless the "purging" of the country's ruling ZANU-PF stops.

Though the general did not mention Mugabe by name, the intervention was clearly a response to the president's firing of his deputy, Emerson Mnangagwa.

The move is widely seen as an effort to ensure that Mugabe's successor will be his wife Grace.

The army will not tolerate the political leadership of those who did not participate in the "liberation struggle" that led to Zimbabwe ending white minority rule in 1980.

Grace Mugabe, born in 1965, was a school-girl at the time and did not participate in

this "struggle." Once in the State House typing pool, she became Mugabe's mistress and then his second wife four years after the death of his first wife, Sallie, a Ghanian who was widely popular.

### ■ Rapacious for wealth

(Mugabe claims that on her deathbed, Sallie gave her blessing to the union with Grace; Zimbabweans love the ongoing soap opera.) They have three children together. Apparently, she is rapacious for personal wealth and is often called "Gucci Grace."

The power balance between Mugabe and those around him and the military is opaque and always in flux. Many senior military officers have done very well out of the wholesale looting of Zimbabwe.

Emmerson Mnangagwa was a leader in the independence movement and spent time in exile during the liberation struggle. Since liberation, he served in numerous high positions in Mugabe's government, becoming vice president in 2014. Called the "Crocodile" for his cunning, he is widely regarded as Zimbabwe's richest man.

Are there issues beyond a Mafiosi-like



Robert Mugabe

fight over the swag from a looted state? There are.

### ■ Younger generation

The army leaders, veterans of the "struggle," represent an older generation. Grace, improbable though it may seem, represents a

younger generation associated with reform.

All over the country, the ZANU-PF dominates patronage/clientage networks. In general, Mugabe (and presumably Grace) remains very popular in rural areas, where he is credited with expelling the white farmers and redistributing their land to those that work it, but he is deeply unpopular in urban areas.

Mugabe is one of the last remaining African liberation icons and is therefore above criticism by other African leaders. For their part, these other leaders tend to appreciate his outspokenness.

For example, in his speech at the UN General Assembly, he characterized President Donald Trump as a "Gold Goliath" because of his "attacks" on North Korea, presumably the "David" in this tableau.

Many Africans share Mugabe's view about American arrogance overseas, but are reluctant to express it. Hence, if the military does make a move, it would likely strip Mugabe of power but could still keep him as its figurehead.

(Source: Newsweek)



# Islamic development bank (IDB) — another Saudi stooge

**1 →** How could anyone endorse such an institution, much less work with or for it and live in Saudi Arabia? If one is associated with an organization such as this, one is complicit in its policies and actions. Saudi Arabia so dominates the IDB that the institution should be more appropriately renamed the Saudi-Sunni Development Bank.

The reason to bring up my inconsequential experience is to shine a ray of light on the depth of Al-Saud obsession and hatred for Iran and how this could blow up the Middle East unless all participants take a deep breath and come to their senses to reach a broad accord for regional peace.

It is well known that Saudi Arabia, now in the person of Mohammad bin Salman, is convinced that Iran poses an existential threat to the House of Saud. The Al-Saud tribe is so determined to confront and oppose anything that has even a shred of connection to Iran that employees interfere with a small wire to an irrelevant American citizen born in Iran over 70 years ago.

But when it comes to threats they consider existential, the Al-Saud tribe will spend unlimited funds to confront anything that has a shred of connection to Iran. As they see the United States a pillar of their rule, they have and will continue to spend hundreds of billions of dollars for: (i) the purchase of U.S. arms; (ii) lucrative advisory/consulting contracts for senior former U.S. government officials (cabinet members, generals and admirals and members of Congress); (iii) donations to the foundations/universities of current and former senior government officials; (iv) Saudi or Arab-U.S. councils and roundtables;

(v) universities with Saudi/Arab endowed chairs and programs; and (vi) implicit, or even explicit, promises of contracts to serving senior U.S. officials when they leave office. Besides their U.S. expenditures, the Al-Saud tribe bribes sitting heads of state in Muslim countries and funds any anti-Shia and anti-Iran faction around the world. And of course their financing of radical Muslims in madrassas and in mosques around the world is well-known territory. Before the 2016 elections, the U.S. was open for business, now the U.S. is open for sale and much more

to Al-Saud liking as their goal is to drag the U.S. into a war with Iran.

Why all this is ever more dangerous for the world is simple. Besides the ongoing surrogate wars in Syria and Yemen, the historic conflicts in Bahrain and Lebanon may erupt out of control, a new active front may soon open up in Afghanistan (where Iran has largely supported U.S. efforts) between the Taliban and the Hazara, or Shia, resulting in Iran and Iraq joining forces to expel the U.S. from Iraq and face the Saudi-Sunni onslaught everywhere

from Afghanistan to the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean and in the process go face to face with the Al-Sauds and their backers including Israel.

The paramount ambition of the U.S., Saudi Arabia and Israel to weaken and to impose regime change in Iran has ironically become the impetus for reaching a Palestinian-Israeli peace accord, under development by three orthodox Jews and a Coptic Christian as Muslim participation is irrelevant to Mr. Trump. The Al-Sauds would happily forsake their Arab and Muslim brethren if the U.S. and Israel take on Iran, dethrone Bashar Al-Assad and annihilate Hezbollah, even if sparks a new frontier of conflicts and further inflames the Sunni-Shia divide.

While some in the U.S. may look at such a possibility with glee, they should think twice about what they seek. Looking at this possibility and Trump's desire to support Saudi and Israeli wishes by abrogating the nuclear accord, Iran would be well advised to (i) rapidly build up its military, (ii) expand and cement its relations with Iraq, (iii) further strengthen Hezbollah, (iv) energize its supporters in Afghanistan, (v) quietly reach out to dissidents within the large Al-Saud tribe, (vi) be ready, at a moments notice, with a propaganda plan when the U.S. breaks the nuclear treaty in any indisputable way, no matter how small, to resume at hyper speed its nuclear program, and (vii) oppose every Saudi aggression against its allies and Shia Muslims. In other words, Iran should (as the Trump advocates) stand with its allies and be strong and prepared as the best way to avoid war.



**1 →** the new war will be an invitation to a risky and uncertain venture that should concern most Israelis, even as Israel's military superiority is not in question. Knowing that Hezbollah has 120,000 rockets and missiles would most certainly factor into Israel's decision to go to war.

The Jerusalem Post (July 12, 2016) reported that Hezbollah now possesses "more missiles below ground in Lebanon than the European NATO allies have above ground."

Any attacks against Hezbollah would likely become a wider confrontation, involving Iran. It is unlikely that Washington's ongoing strategic interests in the Middle East (stability in Iraq and Afghanistan, defeating ISIS and radical Islamic movements, and stable oil prices and markets) will be better served as a result.

How did the crisis and rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia reach this critical point? The rise of young prince Mohammed bin Salman to power has introduced a new element into the way the Saudis strategize about coping with the challenges of domestic politics and regional chaos. Saudi involvement—both directly and indirectly—in Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and Lebanon has thus far failed to pay political dividends.

Furthermore, it appears now that the young Saudi prince seeks to shift attention away from his domestic troubles and challenges (reform, purges, young demographics, unemployment, and declining oil prices) to more nationalistic and foreign policy oriented contexts to further consolidate his power at home.

Placing the spotlight on confronting Iran will effectively serve this purpose, but it is a scenario that, in the long run, will likely have dangerous repercussions. Belligerent saber-rattling rhetoric is best avoided by both sides.

Hopefully, both Tehran and Riyadh will demonstrate restraint in the coming days and weeks, while making genuine and concerted efforts to avoid the disaster that could result from a direct confrontation between the two countries. Meanwhile, Russia, which appears neutral in the conflict between the two countries, might be in a better position than the United States to act as mediator.

## Counter - JCPOA attempts at U.S. congress

By Saeed Sobhani

**TEHRAN** — Anti-JCPOA Measures of the U.S. Congress are still ongoing. Although officials and senators from the two Democratic and Republican parties have been silent over recent days, they will soon unveil the joint plan of Corker and Cotton. In other words, the U.S. Senate seeks to elaborate and theorize Donald Trump's demands regarding the JCPOA. The U.S. Congress, like the White House, is struggling to deal with the nuclear and step away from it. Tom Cotton and Bob Corker were set by the White House a long time before Trump's speeches to prepare a plan to reform the JCPOA according to the White House's demands.

From the outset, they planned to present seniors and members of the House of Representatives after Trump's speech. Thus Cotton-Corker's plan has not been raised after Trump's recent speech. A new plan proposed by the Senate to change the JCPOA, calls for putting permanent limitations on Iran, automatic return of sanctions against Iran and inspection of military sites.

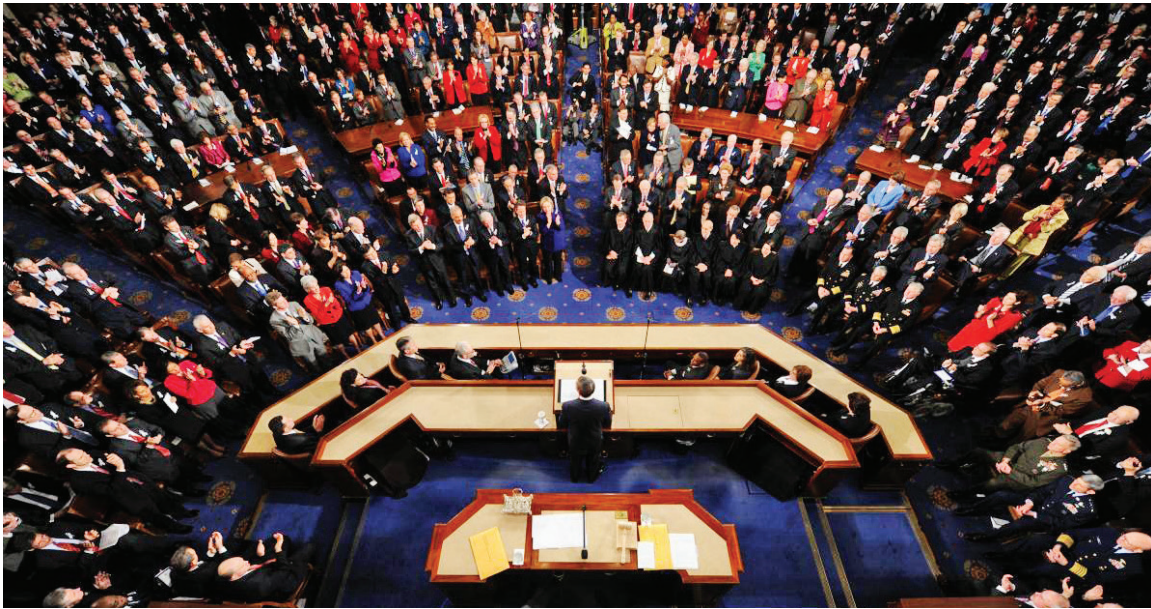
Meanwhile, attention should be paid to the decoration of Corker and Cotton's plan by the American media.

They want to suggest that this plan doesn't violate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). But a review of the content of this plan shows that all its clauses violate the nuclear agreement between Iran and the members of the P5 + 1. In his speech on Iran, the US president outlined a new strategy for Washington towards Iran, and called on Congressional representatives to change the country's internal laws to monitor the JCPOA. At the same time as the president's speech, two senior Republican representatives unveiled a plan that demands the automatic restoration of sanctions against Iran in case of a violation of the newly set limits by our country.

According to the Associated Press, the Corker- Cotton plan does not necessarily violate the nuclear deal! But it can eventually change the deal by requiring Iran to undergo new conditions which aren't accepted by our country.

Contrary to the Associated Press and other dependent media in the U.S., the application of any of the provisions of the Cotton-Corker plan is synonymous to a real breach of the nuclear deal with Iran. In the Corker-Cotton plan, the mechanism for the reciprocity of sanctions against Iran has been speeded up and intensified. The draft prepared by US senators has expanded the criteria that could lead to the resumption of sanctions against Iran.

The following subjects are among these criteria, which could lead to the resumption of sanctions against Iran: Any attempt by Iran to convert the space launcher into an intermediate- or long-range missile, would automatically lead to automatic nuclear sanctions. Another part emphasizes that the flight test, production, or deployment of continental ballistic missiles would be synonymous with the violation of



the JCPOA by Iran and means the return to nuclear sanctions.

Here, there is little doubt that the «Cotton-Corker» plan, which appears to be supported by many senators, is regarded as an objective breach of the JCPOA. In the end, the mechanism for the return of sanctions has been defined in a different way. On the other hand, in this project, there is a direct link between Iran's missile activities and our nuclear activities. This is while in the same year 2015 and during the last round of nuclear talks between Iran and the members of the P5 + 1, one of the basic conditions for the acceptance of Iran's nuclear deal was the lack of a link between the JCPOA and the missile power of the Islamic Republic of Iran. But this rule has already been violated in the Cotton-Corker joint plan.

One of the issues that has been considered in the plan of these two extremist senators is the inspection of military sites in Iran. The Cotton-Corker plan seeks to disparage the nuclear deal if Iran refuses to grant the access to the IAEA for inspection of its sites, including military sites. In other words, if the International Atomic Energy Agency requests Iran to inspect military sites and Iran opposes such a request, then the United States can announce a violation of Iran's nuclear accord and re-impose unilateral sanctions on our country!

However, as noted, politicians and media owners of both Democratic and Republican parties in the United States have been trying to prevent the truth about the Cotton-Corker plan. An overview of the analytical line and media coverage of the American media in response to the plan presented

by two extremist Republican senators should be taken into consideration. In this line of news, the objective contradictions of this plan with the text of the JCPOA have been ignored (especially the clauses and provisions related to how sanctions are to be re-imposed). For example, the Associated Press reported that the purpose of the plan is to eliminate the provisions that the White House and opposition parties in the United States are describing as «defects» in the nuclear deal. It should be noted that U.S. President Donald Trump, has announced that he has ordered his government to cooperate with Congress and allies of the United States to remove these defects.

He mentioned that he has ordered his government to resolve the very serious shortcomings of this agreement by working closely with the Congress and the U.S. allies. And if they can't reach an agreement with the Congress and the European allies, the deal will be canceled.

Currently, the U.S. media outlines the plans of the two extremist senators as a plan that does not violate the nuclear deal with Iran, and at the same time, the concerns of the president of the United States are considered in it! This is while the «Cotton-Corker» plan that is a clear breach of the JCPOA.

No matter what the American media try to say, the new plan which will soon be presented in the Senate, violate the nuclear deal with Iran, and the claims by the U.S. media that the JCPOA isn't violated in this plan are all false. Consequently, the plan presented by Cotton and Corker should be strongly condemned.

## Foreign troops, not Saudi security forces, arrested princes: sources

**TEHRAN** — (**Tasnim**) — Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is going ahead with his so-called anti-corruption plan and royal purge under the supervision of foreign troops, informed sources in Riyadh said.

Bin Salman's arrest of hundreds of potential rivals, including 11 royal princes and many influential Saudi businessmen, is underway in Saudi Arabia under the banner of an anti-corruption drive, but it is still not clear when the detainees would be able to appear in a royal court, the sources told Ray al-Youm, a key news website monitoring developments in the Arab world, on Tuesday.

The princes were arrested not by Saudi security forces but by foreign troops, family members and relatives of the arrested princes confirmed, according to the sources.

The Saudi regime has denied this despite complaints from the princes' family members.

Muhammad bin Salman, known as MbS, has amassed more power in the last two years than any member of the House of Saud, including its kings. The young prince, who before his father came to power held no position of significance, is

now the heir to the throne, minister of defense, chairman of the newly launched "anti-corruption" committee, and, by royal decree, the man in charge of Saudi Arabia's primary source of wealth, Saudi Aramco.

The concentration of power in the hands of a man who was a junior prince is without precedent in the history of the House of Saud.

The House of Saud, which has governed Saudi Arabia as its personal fiefdom since the Kingdom's creation in 1932, has long depended on consensus and a somewhat equitable distribution of the country's wealth—which is regarded as the property of the House of Saud not that of the people of Saudi Arabia—to maintain relatively peaceful relations within the family. For years, there was so much money washing around that it was in no one's interest to not play by the unwritten rules that govern the dynamics of what is the world's wealthiest extended family.

MbS has turned the notion of rule by consensus on its head. The prince has rapidly consolidated power in the Kingdom and as the recent purge demonstrates, is

intent on destroying any and all rivals before they have time to act against him.

While dozens of leading businessmen and princes have been arrested, two men stood out in terms of their potential to threaten Muhammad bin Salman's ascension to the throne: Prince Mansour bin Muqrin, who died in a helicopter crash near Yemen this week, and Prince Mutaib bin Abdullah, who has been removed as head of Saudi Arabia's National Guard.

The late Prince Mansour bin Muqrin was viewed by many within the House of Saud as a level-headed reform minded young prince who was already beginning to demonstrate some skill in his position as deputy governor for Saudi Arabia's increasingly restive southern province of 'Asir.

If an adversarial authoritarian regime conducted such a purge and justified it in the same way, the near-unanimous response from the West would be criticism and ridicule, and that response would be appropriate. When MBS and his father do it, they are embraced by the US and their justification is taken at face value by far too many news outlets.

## Dangers of cold war between Riyadh and Tehran



# How a rare protest scared the Eritrean regime

By Abraham T Zere

Amid the standard heavy military presence and the regime's ban of any associations and gatherings, Asmara experienced an unusual protest on October 31. As the widely shared video clips captured by mobile phones have shown, demonstrators in Eritrea's capital city that day were met with gunshots and violence from government forces.

The Asmara regime rarely acknowledges such incidents unless they get out of control. Apparently realizing it's impossible to conceal what has been widely shared, Eritrean Minister of Information Yemane Gebremeskel instead chose to downplay the incident, tweeting "Small demonstration by one school in Asmara dispersed without any casualty, hardly breaking news". On November 4, an opinion piece appeared on the official organs of the Ministry of Information claimed that the demonstrators were a "group of teenagers" chanting "Allahu Akbar".

Citing an opposition leader based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, international media reported that at least 28 people had been killed in the attack in Asmara and more than 100 injured. Human Rights Watch stated, "There is no clear evidence that anyone was killed at this protest".

As part of the continued centralization of power and control, the Eritrean ministry of education recently sent an official letter to three schools in Asmara run by religious institutions. Stating that religious institutions should only do their spiritual duties and leave all public services to the state, the letter states that the schools run by the Coptic Orthodox Church, Catholic Church, and the Islamic school are officially transformed to the state schools as of the beginning of the academic year, and the schools should report directly to their respective school districts.

## ■ Halting religious education

The letter also instructs the schools to comply with the state education system and follow similar guidelines. In the case of Al Diaa Islamic School, that holds about 3,000 students, the state education standard meant to ban the headscarf and halt religious education.

In response to the state's attempt to nationalize the Al Diaa Islamic School, Hajji Musa Mohammednur, respected senior citizen and president of the board of the school, gave an impassioned speech at a parents and teachers meeting, openly saying that the state should refrain from such interference.

On October 22, the state security arrested Mohammednur. Parents and teachers who demanded his release were similarly taken into custody.

Tension rose and on October 31, a substantial number of parents, teachers and community members gathered at the school

premises and headed to the Office of the President to demand the release of Mohammednur and others. The demonstrators reportedly were dispersed by the anti-mob Special Forces of Office of the President.

Shocked by the protest, President Isaias Afwerki and his security apparatus responding brutally not only to crackdown on the protest, but if possible to permanently discourage others from undertaking demonstrations in the future.

As an immediate precaution, one of the military zonal operations, the Rapid Action Force, has been deployed in Asmara. Locals have observed heavy artillery deployed on the outskirts of Asmara. A directive has been passed to watch certain neighborhoods in Asmara and other cities in Eritrea that are considered likely to see such eruptions.

Hundreds of people have been arrested in connection with the demonstration. The report adds young students taken from sec-

ondary schools have been subjected to extreme physical torture in Asmara's infamous prison facilities. Most mosques in Asmara and other cities are observing unusual "new faces".

## ■ Security doubled

With their youth population and relatively loose control, colleges have the biggest potential to spark such unrest, so as a result, their security has been doubled. Internet cafes, where the majority of Eritreans access the internet (which is intentionally kept at a very low speed), have been under continuous scrutiny.

Through its standard rumor mills, the regime is trying to paint the whole development as purely religion-driven and particularly linked to Islam. This is how they attempted to frame the January 2013 military mutiny. None of the two separate incidents have or had the slightest signs of fundamentalism or particular religious links. ➔13

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# 'Earthquake is not dangerous if you are prepared'

**1 → ■ Knowing first aid would save lives!**

He also pointed to basic first aid as an important factor for being prepared for any emergency or during natural disasters.

"During an earthquake, many victims lose their lives in the first minutes. A person who knows how to give first aid is a great help and can save many lives," he added.

He said that basic first aid is necessary in many cases like severe bleeding or heart arrest.

"No one can help the victim other than people around him or her so it is necessary to know about first aid as a responsible citizen," he said.

**■ Keep calm and don't rush!**

"People should be trained that rushing downstairs or outdoor during the earthquake only endanger their lives," he said.

He said that many people died in rush even in mild earthquakes.

"We should keep calm and don't feel threatened during earthquake, in this way we can take more logical decisions," he added.

**■ Training, training and training!**

Training is an important factor to cope with natural disaster, he said.

Through training, citizens get mentally ready to manage disaster, he explained.

Montazeri said schools are great places to familiarize students with disaster management.

"Ordinary citizens can learn first aid and



Volunteers in southeastern city of Zahedan performs Household Hazard Preparedness Plan on March 7, 2017

**"Training is an important factor to cope with natural disaster. Through training, citizens get mentally ready to manage catastrophe."**

some principle to cope with natural disasters in eight-hour courses," Montazeri mentioned.

He pointed to a national plan held by Iranian Red Crescent Society known as House-

hold Hazard Preparedness Plan (KHADEM).

The door to door plan aims to prepare Iranian families with disaster management, he concluded.

**■ What is KHADEM?**

KHADEM is a Persian acronym for Household Hazard Preparedness Plan which promotes Red Crescent's Households Disaster Preparedness Index (HDPI) by changing their hazard behaviors from 9.3% to 30% up to the end of 2021 through training and educating Iranian households door to door.

The plan is performed in line with article 3 of Iranian Red Crescent Society statute that states "planning and action for disaster preparedness and training the general public in emergencies."

In order to adopt the scheme volunteers would go to the citizens' houses, train them and provide them with home safety guides for 12 sessions at no cost at all.

Families who live in cities and areas with higher natural disaster risks would be given priorities over other families.

Some 250,000 Iranian families are being trained for disaster preparedness by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2017) and the scheme will cover all families by March 2022.

Household Disaster Preparedness Index (HDPI) is composed of 15 components.

It includes identification of safe and unsafe spots of houses, risk assessment of structural parts of building, reducing the danger of non-structural components, preparing family emergency bag and emergency communication plan.

## Build an emergency kit!

Make sure your emergency kit is stocked with the items on the checklist below. Most of the items are inexpensive and easy to find, and any one of them could save your life. Headed to the store? Download a printable version to take with you. Once you take a look at the basic items, consider what unique needs your family might have, such as supplies for pets, or seniors.

After an emergency, you may need to survive on your own for several days. Being prepared means having your own food, water and other supplies to last for at least 72 hours. A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency.

**■ Basic disaster supplies kit**

To assemble your kit, store items in airtight plastic bags and put your entire disaster supplies kit in one or two easy-to-carry containers such as plastic bins or a duffel bag.

A basic emergency supply kit could include the following recommended items:

- Water - one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food - at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Flashlight

- First aid kit
  - Extra batteries
  - Whistle to signal for help
  - Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
  - Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
  - Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
  - Manual can opener for food
  - Local maps
  - Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery
- (Source: ready.gov)

## Colorful Iran: Fresh from the garden at Gilan weekly markets



**L I F E TEHRAN** — The northern Gilan Province is hosting several weekly markets to offer fresh vegetables and other local products in different cities and villages.

At the marketplaces, farmers offer their agricultural products. Each city or village holds this temporary bazaar in one specific day of the week and this way there is an organized plan for local people to attend the event.

The formation of these bazaars dates back to centuries ago.

According to Iranica encyclopedia, as the French traveler Père de la Maze mentions in his book "Journal du voyage du P. de la Maze de Chamakié à Ispahan, par la province du Guilan" in 1698, the "famous Tuesday market of Kaskar", which "attracted a stupendous crowd" in a hundred shops clustered around a caravanserai, apart from the residence of the khan (a title given to rulers and officials) standing on the opposite bank of the river.

Kaskar was a historical city near today's Sumehsara in central Gilan.

## How can we help our children cope with bad news?



Many children are affected and upset about the bad news in the media and many become scared and anxious as a reaction. Children who are quite sensitive or who have a tendency to be worriers can be particularly affected.

While radio reports and written newspaper articles might go over the heads of young children, it is the graphic images in the media and those on TV that might worry them the most.

As a parent, it is important that you protect your children from the impact of

these bad news stories and ensure you are there to explain and support them when they do witness them. The age and maturity of your child are the most important factors to take into account as you consider how best to protect them.

For some children, bad news stories can become the trigger for more serious anxiety problems.

These children might need special help to tackle their worries and to put them in context.

(Source: irishtimes.com)

## PERSIAN DRUGSTORE

### Traditional remedy for rough, dry hands



**L I F E** Our hands are the best companies in our daily life. However, many of us neglect these helpful parts of our body.

Improper hand care and exposure to dry air and chemical products, low humidity, cold weather and water lead to rough overworked hands.

The skin dryness can be a sign of a disease or skin problem like eczema, psoriasis or allergies.

The outer layer of skin is the most common cause of dry and cracked hand. While the skin of your hands is damaged, you are in danger of UV radiation and aging.

Who doesn't want to have smooth and silky hands? Here are some remedies suggested by Iranian traditional medicine, which help you to protect and soothe your hands.

**■ Essential oils are appreciated!**

Olive oil, sweet almond oil and violet oil are great herbal remedies for dry skin. Rub the essential oil on your hand and use it in lieu of hand cream.

The oils moisturize the outer layer of skin and soothe the irritated hands and are suitable for all ages.

**■ Honey and sweet almond oil mask**

Mix 2 to 3 spoons of honey with 3 to 4 spoon of sweet almond oil. Let the mixture to warm up in the oven then add a pinch of chamomile to it. The mask is ready!

**■ Persimmon mask**

As an autumn fruit, persimmon is useful for soothing irritated skin.

Blend persimmon pulps with one spoon of olive oil and spread it on the dry skin. Then rinse it off with cold water.

## Tips to donate effectively after a natural disaster



When natural disasters of magnitude strike, they bring out the best impulses in many of us. We feel empathy for the victims and an urge to reach out and help them in any way we can.

**■ Give cash (first), and your time and labor.** Giving things (goods and services) is a distant third preferred way to donate after a disaster.

If you can afford it, donate money. If you can't donate money, donate your time by volunteering in any number of productive, well-considered ways.

Compared to a financial donation, tangible products of the same or greater value may not be as useful after a natural disaster. While many of us naturally feel the urge to share what we have with those who have suffered the calamity, giving things such as clothes, shoes, jackets, toys, canned goods, or bottled water often backfires for two main reasons.

First, donating goods produces a "matching problem" during a natural disaster. You may give a whole bunch of men's clothes to a shelter in good faith, but what the shelter may really need is clothes for toddlers and young children.

The second reason is the "logistics problem" associated with tangible goods such as clothes, food, and toiletries. Getting your donated items to the point where they are needed becomes a thorny challenge that reduces the value of your donation.

If you cannot afford to give money, no problem. The next best thing to do is to donate your time and labor towards specific activities that will help disaster victims. Whether it is helping out at a shelter, "mucking" someone's house by removing wet carpet and drywall, or making and delivering meals to first responders, personal time and labor is easier to customize and deploy as and when needed than material things.

**■ Don't give all at once.** Stagger your donation over a lengthy period that corresponds to the victims' recovery period.

Ideally, the duration of your donation should correspond to the recovery period. But even if it doesn't, stagger your giving over a longer period than simply making a one-shot donation.

Victims of a natural disaster take a long time to recover.

As soon as mainstream and social media move on to the next news story, so does the attention of donors and helpers. In one study, for example, there was a sharp drop-off in giving six weeks after a natural disaster, and by week 14, donations had dried up completely.

How can you avoid this? First, decide how much money you want to donate. Then divide it into monthly installments that cover a lengthy time frame, say a year or more. Give the installment each month or set up a recurring donation schedule.

**■ Avoid donating impulsively.** Do the due diligence and choose a charitable organization that will put your donation to good use.

Donating impulsively to an unknown person or organization, in response to an ad or appeal on social media, may not be the best approach. Even within known charities, there is considerable variation in how efficient they are with using donated money.

(Source: Psychology Today)



## 101 ITEMS FOR YOUR BUCKET LIST!

### #4 Achieve your ideal weight

**■ Yoga exercise**

Are you a few pounds overweight? Maybe more than a few? Being overweight can be a serious health issue. Excess weight raises the risk of certain illnesses, such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer, and prevents you from living an active life, including keeping up with your kids or staying active with friends and family.

I used to be a severe binge eater and making the commitment to overcome my emotional eating, live healthily, and lose my excess weight has been one of the single best decisions I've made in my life.

Make the commitment to be healthy. What is your ideal weight? Are you at your ideal weight today? What can you do to start being healthy?

(Source: personalexcellence.co)



## #IRANIANLIFESTYLE



People donating relief kits to a Red Crescent Society center in Tehran for families of victims of the recent earthquake in Kermanshah (Twitter/Reza Jamili)



## Kerman’s H1 foreign tourist arrivals up 30% y/y

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — International tourist arrivals in Iran’s southeastern Kerman province rose 30 percent in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2017) from a year earlier.



An undated photo depicts travelers walking across the scenic Shahdad Desert in Kerman province.

“The half-year foreign visits to the province shows a 30-percent year-on-year growth while the figure indicates a sevenfold increase in comparison to [calendar] year 1392 (March 2013 – March 2014),” CHTN quoted Mahmoud Vafai, Kerman tourism chief, as saying on Tuesday.

Kerman seeks to exploit its considerable tourism potential in order to achieve sustainable development in the tourism sector, the official added while referring to major expenditure of time and effort to enhance hospitality infrastructure.

“Up to the moment 160 eco-lodges have been constructed across the province [over the past couple of years], which puts Kerman over the top in comparison to other provinces.”

The big and sprawling Kerman province has been a cultural melting pot since antiquity, blending Persians with subcontinental tribe dwellers. It is home to myriad historical sites and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Jabalieh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bathhouse, Malek Jameh Mosque and Shahdad Desert to name a few.

## Upsurge in Iranian travelers visiting Azerbaijan

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — The number of Iranian travelers to Azerbaijan has risen by nearly 64 percent in the first 10 months of 2017 compared to the same period last year.

Around 320,000 Iranians visited the neighboring country in January-October this year in comparison with 204,000 the year before, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The Republic of Azerbaijan hosted a total of 2,276,604 foreign nationals during the 10-month period, showing 20.1 growth year on year. Russian, Georgian, Iranian and Turkish tourists accounted for the highest number of visits to the country.

## Ancient potteries come to light in western Iran

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — A team of Iranian archeologists have recently unearthed clusters of ancient potteries near Berahma, Lorestan province, western Iran.

“The excavations yield potteries that date back to various epochs of the medieval Islamic era, Parthian era (247 BC – 224 CE) and the Iron Age,” IRIB wrote on Wednesday, quoting a report by the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Research Center.

The artifacts were excavated from the surface of Tepeh Berahma and its surrounding areas, the report said, without providing further details.

## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Historic center of Salvador de Bahia

Founded in 1549 on a small peninsula that separates Todos os Santos Bay from the Atlantic Ocean on the northeast coast of Brazil, Salvador de Bahia became Portuguese America’s first capital and remained so until 1763.

Its founding and historic role as colonial capital associate it with the theme of world exploration. Salvador de Bahia’s historic center – an eminent example of Renaissance urban structuring adapted to a colonial site – is the Cidade Alta (Upper Town), a defensive, administrative and residential neighborhood perched atop an 85-m-high escarpment.



A view of Salvador de Bahia in Brazil

This densely built colonial city par excellence of the Brazilian northeast is distinguished by its religious, civil and military colonial architecture dating from the 17th to the 19th centuries. Salvador de Bahia is also notable as one of the major points of convergence of European, African and American Indian cultures of the 16th to 18th centuries.

The settlement of Salvador de Bahia, strategically situated overlooking an immense bay on the Brazilian coast, was aimed at centralizing the activities of the metropolis in Portuguese America and facilitating trade with Africa and the Far East.

The city grew quickly, becoming Brazil’s main seaport and an important center of the sugar industry and the slave trade.

There are many streets lined with brightly colored houses, often decorated with fine stucco-work, that are characteristic of the colonial city. Salvador de Bahia was also, from 1558, the first slave market in the New World, with slaves arriving to work on the sugar plantations. (Source: UNESCO)

# Masjed-e Agha Bozorg: Gorgeous blend of Islamic, Persian architecture

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** — Masjed-e Agha Bozorg (Agha Bozorg Mosque) is simply one of many top destinations in central Iran that lure not only the faithful but travelers and architecture buffs.

Standing tall in the oasis city of Kashan, the 19th-century mosque boasts a pleasing symmetry in its traditional design that is embellished by intricate plasterwork, woodwork, mirrorwork and geometric tilework patterns.

A tribute to the Islamic architecture, the mosque delicately takes elements of Persian architecture as well.

The massive structure includes several congregational halls, adjoining arcades, tiled minarets, massive badgirs (wind towers) and an austere dome. The mud-brick walls, arches and ceilings are covered with Quranic inscriptions and mosaics as well.

Narratives say that the mosque is named after Mulla Muhammad Mahdi Naraqī (1715-1795) who was nicknamed “Agha Bozorg” for being a Shia philosopher and theologian.

Many travelers opt to bypass Kashan on their journeys between Tehran, Isfahan and Yazd, but this delightful city on the edge of the Dasht-e Kavir (a large desert lying in the middle of the Iranian plateau) has long been one of most alluring destinations in the country.

Rich clusters of architectural wonders, an atmospheric covered bazaar, boutique hotels, lofty mansions, scenic landscapes, a UNESCO-registered garden and hospitable people are amid charms of the city.

#### Under tourists’ eyes

Here is a select of comments that visitors to the mosque have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the world:

#### “Surprised!”

This mosque provided more artisan work than I expected. I remember thinking wow this is pretty special. The ceilings, the tiles and the artwork are just beautiful. (Sue P. form Perth, Australia; reviewed November 2017)

#### “All bricks mosque”

If you are in Kashan you will probably visit it... Great perspective from the entrance, great picture before sunset cause of lightning.



A view of Masjed-e Agha Bozorg, a 19th-century mosque in Kashan, central Iran

Not a lot of tourist as everywhere in summer, but less cause there is no school either. (Agathe L. from New York City, U.S.; reviewed August 2017)

#### “Very atmospheric in the evening”

The mosque is humble compared to some

other big mosques in some big cities but it’s very centrally located and is very atmospheric in the early evening. We visited here on our way to have dinner and we ended up staying longer than we thought. Also it’s still used by a lot of locals. Many of them come and

Many travelers opt to bypass Kashan on their journeys between Tehran, Isfahan and Yazd, but this delightful city on the edge of the Dasht-e Kavir has long been one of most alluring destinations in the country.

## Ancient data, modern math and the hunt for 11 lost cities of the Bronze Age

Using numbers scrawled by Bronze Age merchants on 4,000-year-old clay tablets, a historian and three economists have developed a novel way to pinpoint the locations of lost cities of the ancient world.

The ancient city of Kanesh, located in the middle of modern-day Turkey, was a hub of trade in the Anatolian region four millennia ago. Modern-day archaeologists have unearthed artifacts from the city, including more than 23,000 cuneiform texts, inscribed in clay by ancient Assyrian merchants.

The texts themselves are mostly “business letters, shipment documents, accounting records, seals and contracts,” according to the working paper by Gojko Barjamovic, Thomas Chaney, Kerem A. Cosar and Ali Hortacsu. Barjamovic is an expert in the history of Assyria, the ancient Middle Eastern kingdom founded near the Tigris River in what is present-day Iraq. His co-authors are economists from, respectively, the Paris Institute of Political Studies, the University of Virginia and the University of Chicago.

Traditionally, historians and archaeologists have analyzed texts like these for bits of qualitative information that might locate a site — descriptions of landscape features, for instance, or indications of distance or direction from other, known cities.

But Barjamovic and his co-authors had a different idea:

What if they analyzed the quantitative data contained in the tablets instead? In the passage above, for instance, you have a record of three separate cargo shipments: Durhumit to Kanesh, Kanesh to Wahshushana, and Durhumit to Wahshushana.

If you analyze thousands of tablets and tally up each record of a cargo shipment contained therein, you end up with a remarkably comprehensive picture of trade among the cities around Kanesh 4,000 years ago. Barjamovic did exactly that, translating and parsing 12,000 clay tablets, extracting information on merchants’ trade itineraries.

What they had, in the end, was a record of hundreds of trade interactions among a total of 26 ancient cities: 15 whose locations were known and 11 that remain lost.

Here’s where things get really interesting: In the ancient world, trade was strongly dependent on geographic distance. Moving goods from Point A to Point B was a lot more difficult at a time when roads were rough, goods had to be transported on the backs of donkeys and robbers lurked everywhere.

Cities located closer together traded more, while those farther apart traded less. This is the key insight driving the entire paper. Let’s say we have an ancient city, such as Kanesh, that we know the location of. We also have two lost cities, Kuburnat and Durhumit. If we know Kanesh traded more



A clay tablet with cuneiform inscription from Anatolia circa 1875-1840 B.C. Researchers have extracted numbers from thousands of these tablets to create a database of trade in ancient Assyria. (Los Angeles County Museum of Art)

with Kuburnat than with Durhumit, we can reasonably assume that Kuburnat is closer to Kanesh than Durhumit is. (Source: The Washington Post)

## What happens when a plane’s landing gear fails?



The plane was forced to land on just three of its five sets of wheels (Credit: Senohrabek – Fotolia)

runway before the pilot allows the nose to drop onto the tarmac at the last moment. There were no injuries.

In 2011, LOT Polish Airlines Flight 016 made a belly landing - caught in a remarkable video - in Warsaw after its landing gear failed - there were no injuries reported. Similarly, Malev Flight 262 from Budapest to Thessaloniki had to make a gear-up landing on July 4, 2000, but there were no casualties.

Patrick Smith, a U.S. pilot, examines landing gear issues in his book Cockpit Confidential, with reference to a JetBlue flight which was forced to make an emergency landing at Los Angeles in 2005 when its wheels failed to retract properly after take-off.

“Although only a minor incident from a technical point of view, the entire affair was caught on live television, engrossing millions of Americans and needlessly scaring the living daylight out of everybody on the plane,” he explains.

“Moments after liftoff from Burbank, California, the pilots realized their forward landing gear had not properly retracted and was cocked at 90 degrees. Unable to realign it, they would have to make an emergency landing with the tires twisted sideways. The pilots and JetBlue’s dispatch team agreed to a diversion to Los Angeles, primarily to take advantage of LAX’s long runways. But first came the matter of the plane’s gross weight, which was several thousand pounds above

its maximum allowable heft for touchdown.

“The A320, like other smaller jetliners, does not have a fuel dump capacity. This meant three hours of leisure flying over the Pacific until the poundage was down to the appropriate amount. Those three hours are what allowed this relative nonevent to be catapulted into a full-on spectacle.

“The California news outlets, out and about in search of the usual car chases and traffic accidents, had only to tip their cameras upwards to catch the Airbus as it circled.

“On board, 146 souls readied for what, according to the commentators, could very well be a devastating crash. Those of us who knew better... saw a jetliner preparing for what would be a telegenic but perfectly manageable landing. And that’s what we got.”

Gear-up landings are surprisingly common, and are not always made due to mechanical error. Occasionally a pilot will simply forget to lower it.

A cursory glance at Boeing’s record of 2016 aviation accidents for commercial aircraft shows there were 12 incidents involving collapsed or failed landing gears last year.

Sometimes an incident involves a failure to retract the landing gear, in which case an aircraft might return to its departure airport but land normally.

In July two pilots were suspended from duty after their aircraft, carrying 99 passengers, nearly ran out of fuel because they forgot to retract the landing gear after take-off. The additional drag created by the error caused the plane to burn far more fuel than usual. (Source: The Telegraph)



# Air pollution is a bigger risk for people with A, B, or AB blood types: study

People with type A, B, or AB blood have a greater chance of suffering a heart attack or chest pain during episodes of high air pollution compared to those with type O, scientists have found.

Researchers warned that people in those groups should consider staying indoors to minimize their risk if they had underlying heart conditions, such as coronary artery disease.

Scientists have known for some time that pollution raises the chance of a heart attack but it is the first time that the risk has also been linked to blood type.

A study of 14 years of patient data from the Intermountain Medical Center Heart Institute in Utah, U.S., found that the risk of a heart attack or chest pain doubled for people of type A, B, or AB blood when pollution hits high levels.

## ■ The risk rose

In contrast the risk rose only rose by 40 percent for those with type O.

The “association between heart attacks and pollution in patients with non-O blood isn’t something to panic over, but it is something to be aware of,” said Dr. Benjamin Horne, a clinical epidemiologist and lead investigator of the study from the Intermountain Medical Center Heart Institute in Salt Lake City.

“In the information we provide to our patients about pollution, we try to stress that they can do something about it to reduce their



**Around 55 percent of people are A, B, or AB and they are thought to be at greater risk of heart problems because their blood contains greater quantities of a clotting agent.**

risks: Stay indoors out of pollution. Exercise indoors.”

Air pollution in Britain is thought to contribute to around 40,000 early deaths a year, according to the Royal Colleges of Physicians and of Pediatrics and Child Health.

Recent research by the World Health Organization found that 44 major UK towns and cities now breach WHO guidelines on air quality with particulate levels so high they cause six million sick days each year.

## ■ Air pollution

Safe levels of air pollution are generally considered to be under 20 micrograms per cubic meter, but during levels of high pollution, the PM2.5 count - the measure of small particulates in the air - raise to around 60 micrograms per cubic meter. In London it has been known to rise to 197.

The study found that for every additional 10 micrograms over 20, the risk to people with type A, B, or AB blood increased by 25 percent, but only by 10 per cent for people with type O.

Around 55 percent of people are A, B, or AB and they are thought to be at greater risk of heart problems because their blood contains greater quantities of a clotting agent.

The study was presented on Tuesday at the American Heart Association Scientific Sessions in Anaheim, California.

(Source: The Telegraph)

## A new type of gravitational wave could be spotted soon: new research

It can’t be stressed enough how crazy gravitational waves are. These supremely violent events take place many light years in the distance, and because they literally alter the shape of space and time, the ripples they produce can be detected on Earth. But gravitational wave astronomy is only in its infancy, and there’s even stranger things yet to be observed.

To date, researchers have only spotted gravitational waves from colliding black holes and colliding stars — that’s what their detectors are set up to do.

But new research demonstrates that within the next decade scientists may be able to spot a whole new kind of gravitational wave with a different tool called a pulsar timing array, or PTA. These waves would stem from pairs of black holes millions, even billions times the mass of our Sun orbiting one another like giants dancing and stomping in the distance.

## ■ Gravitational waves

All of the headline-making gravitational wave events you’ve heard about were discovered by LIGO and Virgo, several-mile-long underground tunnels where laser light is split and then brought back together.

A gravitational wave makes one of the split beams wobble



and interfere with the other beam, making a wave shape visible in a detector. But these detectors can only spot wobbles occurring at least 10 times per second — they’re immune to less frequent ones that might be created by things such as merging galaxies with a pair of orbiting supermassive black holes at their center.

The key to discovering these particular black holes would be a different kind of experiment called pulsar timing arrays (PTAs). These experiments measure the timing of

pulsars, light sources that send beams to earth at regular intervals like lighthouses, explains Chiara Mingarelli, astrophysicist from the Flatiron Institute, in a blog post for Scientific American:

## ■ Radio pulses

PTAs take advantage of the regular arrival times of radio pulses from millisecond pulsars to search for gravitational waves. When two supermassive black holes coalesce into one, the mergers bathe the universe in low-frequency waves, stretching and squashing the fabric of spacetime.

The pulsars and the Earth behave like buoys on the surface of a choppy spacetime sea, bobbing up and down as the waves pass by. This causes changes in the timing of pulsar pulses that can be detected in carefully designed experiments here on Earth.

But Mingarelli’s model in Nature Astronomy, used real data to predict how many and even which galaxies would radiate these waves. “Before, everyone used simulations that couldn’t tell you which galaxies to look at specifically,” she told Gizmodo. “But using my techniques with theoretical galaxy merger rate, we can point to galaxies in the sky and say ‘that one.’” In this case, the most likely merger is M104, the Sombrero Galaxy.

(Source: Gizmodo)

## Blasting aerosols to cool the planet might lead to drought and hurricanes

Blasting aerosols into the atmosphere to fight climate change could have the unfortunate side effect of creating drought and more hurricanes, according to new research.

Some scientists believe that sending a plane to spray sulfate aerosols into the sky will help cool down the Earth. But drastic moves might lead to unintended consequences, according to scientists who ran a model to see how spraying the sulfate would affect our climate.

The model simulates how an annual spray of aerosols in both hemispheres would affect the climate between 2020 and 2070 — and it found that there could be negative consequences in both regions. The results were published today in the journal Nature Communications.

This method of climate engineering, called stratospheric aerosol injection, is mostly speculative right now, but seems to



be well-supported by science.

The idea is that aerosols are supposed to build a reflective layer that blocks out part of the Sun and cool the Earth.

## ■ Injecting aerosols

The process already happens naturally, when volcanoes erupt. But injecting aerosols might create different effects depending on

the location, and how the aerosols interact with the jet streams, or various currents of air around the Earth.

Spraying aerosol in the northern hemisphere would lead to fewer cyclones in the North Atlantic, like the ones that have plagued us all summer and fall — but it would create drought in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of India. So it would be “good for the southeast US, the Caribbean, and Mexico in terms of dissipating storms,” lead author Anthony Jones of the United Kingdom’s national weather service told CarbonBrief. But it would be bad for other parts of the world.

This isn’t the first time scientists have raised concerns over climate engineering, also called geoengineering.

## ■ Tropical zones

Geoengineering could set the stage for global conflict between temperate and tropical countries as rich northern countries set

the world’s temperature and poorer tropical zones are left to sweat out the consequences, according to critics such as Pat Mooney of ETC Group, a Montreal-based environmental organization.

Spraying aerosol in the southern hemisphere, in contrast, wouldn’t create drought, according to today’s study. But it would create more tropical storms in the North Atlantic, which is not necessarily welcome given the damage that has already been done from this past season.

Stratospheric aerosol injection probably isn’t the best way to fight climate change, though Harvard scientists are moving forward with plans to experiment with the technique. It’s an interesting idea and it’s always good to have more tools in the toolkit — it’s just important to also think about the potential risks and uneven consequences.

(Source: The Verge)

## Biologists just determined how long life can survive on Mars

Mars is not exactly a friendly place for life as we know it. While temperatures at the equator can reach as high as a balmy 35°C (95°F) in the summer at midday, the average temperature on the surface is -63°C (-82°F), and can reach as low as -143°C (-226°F) during winter in the polar regions.

Its atmospheric pressure is about one-half of one percent of Earth’s, and the surface is exposed to a considerable amount of radiation.

Until now, no one was certain if microorganisms could survive in this extreme environment. But thanks to a new study by a team of researchers from the Lomonosov Moscow State University (LMSU), we may now be able to place constraints on what kinds of conditions microorganisms can withstand.

## ■ Significant implications

This study could therefore have significant implications in the hunt for life elsewhere in the Solar System, and maybe even beyond.

The study, titled “100 kGy gamma-affected microbial communities within the ancient Arctic permafrost under simulated Martian conditions”, recently appeared in the scientific journal Extremophiles.

The research team, which was led by Vladimir S. Cheptsov of LMSU, included members from the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg State Polytechnical University, the

Kurchatov Institute and Ural Federal University.

For the sake of their study, the research team hypothesized that temperature and pressure conditions would not be the mitigating factors, but rather radiation.

As such, they conducted tests where microbial communities contained within simulated Martian regolith were then irradiated.

The simulated regolith consisted of sedimentary rocks that contained permafrost, which were then subjected to low temperature and low pressure conditions.

As Vladimir S. Cheptsov, a post-graduate student at the Lomonosov MSU Department of Soil Biology and a co-author on the paper, explained in a LMSU press statement:

“We have studied the joint impact of a number of physical factors (gamma radiation, low pressure, low temperature) on the microbial communities within ancient Arctic permafrost. We also studied a unique nature-made object — the ancient permafrost that has not melted for about 2 million years.

## ■ Martian regolith

In a nutshell, we have conducted a simulation experiment that covered the conditions of cryo-conservation in Martian regolith. It is also important that in this paper, we studied the effect of high doses (100 kGy) of gamma radiation on prokaryotes’ vitality, while in previous studies no living prokaryotes were ever found after doses higher than 80 kGy.”

the root of their ailments: fructan.

In a new study published online in Gastroenterology, researchers from Monash University in Australia and University of Oslo in Norway have revealed that fructan, a type of carbohydrate found in wheat and some vegetables, may cause similar

symptoms to gluten sensitivities. As a result, some individuals may confuse their fructan problems for gluten sensitivity, and as a result, not properly address and treat their issue.

For the research, the team had 59 individuals who were already on a self-instituted

gluten-free diet, but had been medically excluded from having celiac disease, randomly assigned to eat diets that contained either gluten, fructans, or a placebo. The volunteers did not know which of these diets they were assigned. This was done for a week.

(Source: Newsweek)

## To find new biofuel enzymes, it can take a microbial village

A new study led by researchers at the Department of Energy’s Joint BioEnergy Institute (JBEI), based at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab), demonstrates the importance of microbial communities as a source of stable enzymes that could be used to convert plants to biofuels.

The study, recently published in the journal Nature Microbiology, reports on the discovery of new types of cellulases, enzymes that help break down plants into ingredients that can be used to make biofuels and bioproducts. The cellulases were cultured from a microbiome. Using a microbial community yeers from the approach typically taken of using isolated organisms to obtain enzymes.

The scientists first studied the microbial menagerie present in a few cups of municipal compost. Metagenomic analysis at the DOE Joint Genome Institute (JGI) of the microbiome helped reveal that 70 percent of the enzymatic activity originated from cellulases produced by a cluster of uncultivated bacteria in the compost. They found that the enzymes easily broke down the cellulose in plant biomass into glucose at temperatures up to 80 degrees Celsius.

“Here we’re cultivating an entire community of microbes to access enzymes that we couldn’t get from isolates,” said study principal investigator Steve Singer, senior scientist in Berkeley Lab’s Biological Systems and Engineering Division and director of Microbial and Enzyme Discovery at JBEI. “Some microbes are difficult to culture in a lab. We are cultivating microbes living in communities, as they occur in the wild, which allows us to see things we don’t see when they are isolated.

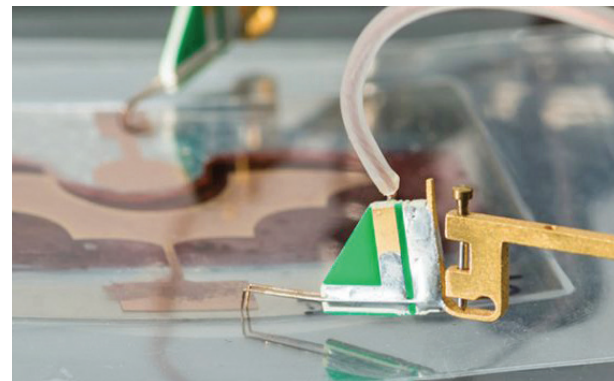
The bacterial population, *Candidatus Reconciliabacillus cel-lulovorans*, yielded cellulases that were arranged in remarkably robust carbohydrate-protein complexes, a structure never before observed in isolates. The stability of the new cellulase complexes makes them attractive for applications in biofuels production, the study authors said.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

## New solar panel design could charge your phone with ambient light

Battery technology is still advancing at a sluggish rate in spite of intense research. The amount of energy you can carry around continues to limit what our mobile devices can do, and current methods of charging can only take us so far.

A French solar power startup with the counterintuitive name of Dracula Technologies says it has developed a new type of solar panel that could be integrated into almost any device thanks to its thin, flexible design. It could be part of your backpack, your shirt, or even your phone.



Most solar panels are based on a silicon substrate. However, they’re bulky and not very flexible. The most reliable and commercially viable solar panels are like this, which limits their usefulness on anything but a building. They also aren’t efficient enough to pick up much energy without direct intense sunlight. That’s why all those solar power batteries need to be left in direct sunlight for the better part of a day to recharge.

Dracula Technologies says its newly designed panels won’t have those limitations. The so-called LAYER design (Light As Your Energetic Response) is flexible and light enough to be integrated into almost anything. The panels can also be custom printed using an inkjet-style contraption. A company could even have LAYER panels produced in the shape of its logo.

LAYER panels are composed of a conductive plastic substrate that can capture energy from indirect light, and they’ll even work indoors. The cells only take about an hour to print. In addition to custom shapes, Dracula Technology can apply different colors to the cells. They can even be transparent if that’s what works best for a given application.

(Source: extremetech.com)

## How digital pills will let your doctor watch your life

The FDA has approved the first-ever digital pill, a version of the antipsychotic medication Abilify that will allow patients to send data about when and if they take their pills to their doctors. The pill comes with an ingrain sensor that operates based on the same principles as a potato battery. It may be the first of its class, but it’s unlikely to be the last.

“I think it would be a bit of a stretch to say that this would be, in the next five years, in every medication. I don’t think that’s realistic. I think you could say 20 to 30 years from now, that’s a possibility,” Andrew Thompson, the co-founder and CEO of Proteus Digital Health, which makes the sensor, told Newsweek.

In theory, digital pills may help tackle the perennial challenge of getting people to take their medications as they are supposed to. (Even people who probably think about adherence more than the average person sometimes slip up. “I just remembered, I need to take one this morning,” Thompson said during an interview.) Only about 30 percent of the pills prescribed in the United States are taken as they’re meant to be, and only 20 percent are refilled correctly. It’s a problem for patients with a wide variety of conditions, as one study found. And, as the American College of Preventive Medicine notes in a clinical reference guide to medication adherence, “patients with psychiatric disabilities are less likely to be compliant.”

The sensor itself got FDA approval in 2012, and it’s been used before as a stand-alone pill that people can take along with their other medications, including blood pressure and diabetes pills. But this is the first time it’s actually been applied to a drug. Abilify, an antipsychotic, is used to treat bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and, less often, depression. It is made by Otsuka Pharmaceutical.

(Source: Newsweek)



## Literacy rate up 2.85% in Iran over 5 years

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Literacy rate in Iran has increased by 2.85 percent between 2011 and 2016, director of the Literacy Movement Organization said.

“Some 5.8 million people are purely illiterate and 11 million are functionally illiterate,” Ali Baqerzadeh said, without mentioning any figures on the literacy rate.

Official figures released by the Statistical Center of Iran, in March 2017, indicate that some 87.6 percent of the Iranian population aging over 6 are literate. The number reflects a 2.8-rise compared to the 2011 census results.



An undated photo of an adult literacy class

While Iranian students shine at international Olympiads and Iran has advanced notably in terms of scientific publications and research output worldwide, many choose to drop out of schools, he regretted.

Despite the fact that students are provided with free of charge schooling on average many are likely to drop out of school after 8 years of attending school, he stated.

There are 781 million adults over the age of 15 estimated to be illiterate, of which 496 million were women, the World’s Women 2015 report found. Women made up more than half the illiterate population in all regions of the world. Moreover, as per another report by UNESCO, 250 million children are failing to acquire basic literacy skills. This results in an exclusion of low-literate and low-skilled youth and adults from full participation in their communities and societies.

According to the Literacy Foundation illiteracy in individuals stems from different, generally inter-related causes which, together, create a series of often insurmountable barriers for those concerned.

Parents with little schooling, lack of books at home and lack of stimulation as to the importance of reading, doing badly at or dropping out of school, difficult living conditions, including poverty, learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, dysorthographia, etc. are the most frequent causes of illiteracy in adults.

Literacy is a driver for sustainable development in that it enables greater participation in the labor market; improved child and family health and nutrition; reduces poverty and expands life opportunities,

Beyond its conventional concept as a set of reading, writing and counting skills, literacy is now understood as a means of identification, understanding, interpretation, creation, and communication in an increasingly digital, text-mediated, information-rich and fast-changing world.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Funeral Arrangements

A: Hi Daniel, how are you **holding up**? I am greatly sorry for your loss.

B: Thank you, I’m doing much better. I’ve begun organizing everything for the funeral.

A: How’s that going?

B: It’s a lot harder than I imagined. There are many things that you have to arrange. I booked a time and date with the **funeral home**, but I still have a lot of things to do.

A: Have you bought a **burial plot** and a **casket**?

B: No. Wendy is being **cremated**. She always talked about how she didn’t want to be buried. I already chose a cremation urn and we plan to spread the ashes in the ocean.

A: I see, that sounds like something she would have really liked. I am sure the **memorial service** will be **tasteful**. You are doing a great job.

B: Thanks, it hasn’t been easy, but luckily we have life insurance and Wendy left behind a detailed will that will **sort out** any other legal matters.

#### ■ Key vocabulary

**hold up:** continue to live through hardship

**funeral home:** the place where a body is kept before a funeral

**burial:** the act of burying, esp. the interment of a dead body

**burial plot:** a piece of property within a cemetery purchased for a burial

**casket:** coffin

**cremate:** burn up something and reduce to ash

**memorial service:** done or made in order to remind people of someone who has died

**tasteful:** a being in keeping with good taste

**sort out:** deal

#### ■ Supplementary vocabulary

**arrange:** to make preparations

**morgue:** a place where dead bodies are stored

**funeral home:** a place where memorial services are held

**to book:** to set a specific time to do something

**to grieve:** to be sad

(Source: irlanguage.com)



# Aid still rushing to quake-hit Kermanshah

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Four days

after the deadly magnitude 7.3 earthquake striking the western province of Kermanshah, medical, relief, and reconstruction aid is still rushing to the region.

The major temblor which was felt in other province of Iran as well as some other regional countries left at least 432 dead and 9,400 injured. More than 270 aftershocks, measuring 3.5 to 4.5 on the Richter scale, have hit the area over the past few days.

Over 1,900 towns and 7 cities of the province were devastated by the earthquake, Mehr news agency quoted Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli as saying.

Many victims who sustained serious injuries were transferred to Tehran to receive proper medical care.

#### ■ Loans, handouts

Kermanshah governor has said that some 40,000 houses both in rural and urban areas have been demolished.

Government spokesman Mohammad Baqer Nobakht has announced some 2.81 trillion rials (nearly \$70 million) is allocated for government handouts to the earthquake victims. Nobakht also explained that some 6.6 trillion rials (nearly \$165 million) is drawn up for low interest loans.

Villagers will be granted with handouts amounting to 50 million rials (\$1,250) and those living in urban areas will receive handouts worth of 60 million rials (\$1,500), he

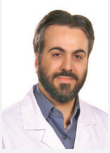


An old man is donating a blanket to the earthquake-stricken victims of Kermanshah.

said. Those who need loans for reconstruction of their houses can take out loans totaling 120 million rials (\$3,000) in addition to 20-million-rial (\$500) handout.

“Those who need home appliances will receive handouts of 20 million rials (\$500) and loans of 30 million rials (\$750),” he added. Nobakht highlighted that additionally

## Keep healthy: Know what you eat, how you eat



### ARTICLE

By Seyed Mahdi Mirghazanfari, MD, PhD

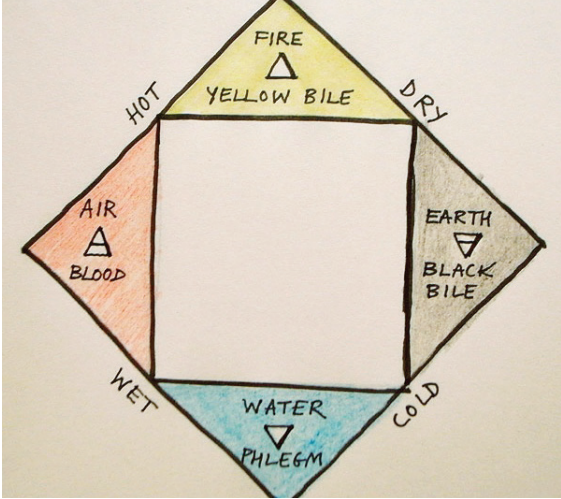
The Iranian traditional medicine puts a strong emphasis on what one must eat and drink - in accordance with their temperament- and how to eat to have a healthier digestive system.

As per the Iranian traditional medicine healthy eating and a healthy digestive system accounts for a healthy lifestyle.

Quoted from Kitab al-Kafi - a hadith collection - Imam Musa Kazem (AS) - the seventh Shia Imam - has said that ‘restraining’ does not necessarily mean not eating at all, but eating small portions.

There other sayings about eating healthily and sensibly as well. Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) has said that the stomach is the house of all illnesses and restraining is the key to treatment.

If a doctor prescribes what’s good to eat or not and stops someone from consuming unhealthy food stuff and drinks one can restore their health by controlling the damage detrimental food and drinks could cause to someone’s health, while it’s highly unlikely that mere prescription



of drugs would constitute to total recovery of a patient.

#### ■ ‘Akhlat’

‘Akhlat’ are liquid humors formed in the liver and gastrointestinal system following digestion. In other words after eating and drinking, digestion, the process of breaking down food stuff into smaller units and converting them

into a substance suitable for absorption, happens.

Afterwards the substances move towards the liver and will be processed again (called the second digestion in traditional medicine) which form the four liquid humors called: blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm.

The four aforesaid humors, or Akhlat, are supposed to supply the cells and the body organs with necessary nutrients.

Excessive amounts of blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm is rooted from the fact that someone has not stick to their healthy diet.

Therefore, it is two of utmost significance to keep the four humors in balance:

--Eat and drink in accordance with one’s temperament (Mizaj): eating good foods and drinks

--Following health tips provided by Iranian traditional medicine on how to eat and drink healthier food items to have a healthier and stronger digestive system

Recognizing the properties of what we eat and drink and knowing our Mizaj would help the digestive system to generate healthy humors so that all organs including muscles, liver, bones, heart, etc., would receive adequate nutrients and work properly which constitute to optimum health.

The Mizaj of each humor, food stuff producing them in the body, symptoms of excessive humor in the body, etc. will be thoroughly explained over the next weeks.

## Plastics found in stomachs of deepest sea creatures

Animals from the deepest places on Earth have been found with plastic in their stomachs, confirming fears that manmade fibers have contaminated the most remote places on the planet.

The study, led by academics at Newcastle University, found animals from trenches across the Pacific Ocean were contaminated with fibers that probably originated from plastic bottles, packaging and synthetic clothes.

Dr Alan Jamieson, who led the study, said the findings were startling and proved that nowhere on the planet was free from plastics pollution.

“There is now no doubt that plastics pollution is so pervasive that nowhere – no matter how remote – is immune,” he said.

Evidence of the scale of plastic pollution has been growing in recent months. Earlier this year scientists found plastic in 83% of global tap water samples, while other studies have found plastic in rock salt and fish.

Humans have produced an estimated 8.3bn tones of plastic since the 1950s and scientists said it risked near permanent contamination of the planet.

Jamieson said underlined the need for swift and meaningful action.

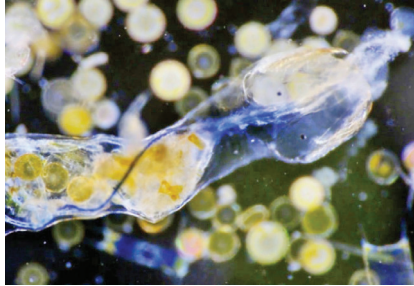
“These observations are the deepest pos-

sible record of micro-plastic occurrence and ingestion, indicating it is highly likely there are no marine ecosystems left that are not impacted by anthropogenic debris.”

He said it was “a very worrying find.”

“Isolating plastic fibers from inside animals from nearly 11 kilometers deep (seven miles) just shows the extent of the problem. Also, the number of areas we found this in, and the thousands of kilometer distances involved shows it is not just an isolated case, this is global.”

The study tested samples of crustaceans found in the ultra-deep trenches that span the entire Pacific Ocean – the Mariana, Ja-



pan, Izu-Bonin, Peru-Chile, New Hebrides and Kermadec trenches.

(Source: The Guardian)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ B ↔ C

## Tehran experiences good air quality for 20 days in a row

Tehran’s air quality has been good since April 16 and fortunately cars could not negatively affect the air quality for the last 20 days, Mehr news agency reported on Saturday.

Although cars are responsible for 80 percent of the air pollution in the metropolises the air quality indices have not indicated a single polluted day since the last week of the first Iranian calendar month of Farvardin, ending April 20.

Since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21) the indices show 9 days of excellent air quality, 33 days of good air quality and 4 days of light air pollution.

However, compared to the same period last year with 11 days of excellent air quality and 35 days of good air quality in general the quality of air have gone down.

### PREFIX/SUFFIX

#### “afore-”

■ **Meaning:** before

■ **For example:** Meet the *aforementioned* Mr. Smith.

### PHRASAL VERB

#### Drop out

■ **Meaning:** to no longer do an activity or belong to a group

■ **For example:** The group gets smaller as members move away or drop out.

### ENGLISH IDIOM

#### Big picture

■ **Explanation:** if you talk about the big picture, you refer to the overall situation, or the project as a whole rather than the details

■ **For example:** While each aspect is important, try not to forget the big picture.

## تهران ۲۰ روز متوالی هوای سالم تنفس کرد

به گزارش روز شنبه خبرگزاری مهر هوای تهران از ۲۷ فروردین ۹۶ تاکنون آلوده نشده است. طی ۲۰ روز اخیر هوا در شاخص سالم قرار داشته و خودروها نتوانسته‌اند بر ناپایداری‌های جوی غلبه کنند.

با وجود اینکه ۸۰ درصد آلودگی هوای تهران نتیجه تردد خودروها و وسایل نقلیه است نتایج مقایسه کیفیت هوای پایتخت طی هفته‌های اخیر نشان می‌دهد آخرین روزی که هوای پایتخت آلوده و شاخص ناسالم برای گروه‌های حساس داشته، ۲۶ فروردین بوده و از آن روز تاکنون ناپایداری‌های جوی اجازه ندادند آلودگی هوا بر آسمان تهران مسلط شود. از ابتدای سال جاری تاکنون هوا ۹ روز پاک، ۳۳ روز سالم و ۴ روز ناسالم برای گروه‌های حساس بوده است. طی مدت مشابه در سال گذشته هوا ۱۱ روز پاک و ۳۵ روز سالم بود. بدین ترتیب مقایسه هوای امسال و سال گذشته حاکی از افت کیفیت هوای پایتخت دارد.



# Hariri didn't resign freely: Emil Lahoud

➔ Aoun said at a meeting with Lebanese journalists and media executives.

Aoun underlined the need for Hariri's immediate return to Lebanon, saying, "We cannot wait a long time for Hariri's return, we cannot stop the state's work."

Later on Wednesday, Hariri repeated his previous statements that he would return home. "I want to repeat and affirm that I am perfectly fine and I will return, God willing, to dear Lebanon as I promised you, you'll see," he wrote on Twitter.

Hariri announced his surprise resignation in Riyadh on November 4, shortly after traveling to Saudi Arabia. The televised announcement saw him reading out from a statement.

Lebanese government officials and senior sources close to Hariri believe that Riyadh forced him to step down and placed him under effective house arrest since he touched down in Saudi Arabia on November 3, a day before he announced his shock resignation.

Lebanon's Foreign Ministry has pledged to keep up pressure on Saudi Arabia not to impede Hariri's return, the al-Akhbar paper reported, citing sources within the ministry.

In a Sunday interview, the first since he flew to Saudi Arabia, Hariri described himself as a "free man" who intended to "return" to his home country "within days," denying widespread speculations that he had been under house arrest.

Observers say even if he returned to Leb-



anon, the House of Saud regime could still hold his family "hostage."

Hariri had taken to Twitter on Tuesday, saying he is "well" and will return to Lebanon "within says," but that his family will stay in Saudi Arabia.

Hariri has cited several reasons, including the security situation in Lebanon, for his sudden decision. He also said that he

realized a plot was being hatched against his life. Furthermore, Hariri also accused Iran and the Lebanese resistance movement, Hezbollah, of meddling in the Arab states' affairs; an allegation the two have strongly rejected. Hezbollah is part of the coalition government led by Hariri.

In the interview, Hariri added that he would be willing to "rescind the resignation"

if intervention in regional conflicts - particularly "by Hezbollah" - stopped.

■ **Lebanese FM: Only Hariri's return can prove his freedom**

Meantime, Lebanon's Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil has said that Prime Minister Saad Hariri can only prove his freedom by returning home.

Bassil made the remark during a meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron in France on Tuesday.

"We hope to resolve this with the quick and immediate return of Prime Minister Hariri to his country ... where he has the right to do what he wants," said Bassil.

Bassil also responded to reports concerning the House of Saud regime's intruding punitive measures against Lebanon.

"Any (Saudi) measures would not only be targeting Lebanon and its stability, this would be a punishment for the region because any instability in Lebanon would cause instability in the region," he said.

The United States Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said last week that the Saudi regime Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir had assured him during a recent meeting that Hariri made the decision by himself. "As you probably know he [Hariri] is a dual citizen of Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. His family has been living in Saudi Arabia for quite some time by his choice, so the foreign minister assured me this was a decision taken solely by him," Tillerson said.

## Myanmar's Rohingya report 'absurd', rights group says

A Myanmar military report that said no Rohingya civilians were killed during a months-long crackdown is "absurd" and the International Criminal Court must now launch its own investigation, a human rights group said.

Myanmar's army released a report late on Monday that found "no deaths of innocent people" after deadly attacks by Rohingya rebels on several police posts in northern Rakhine state on August 25 sparked a brutal military campaign.

The army said 376 "terrorists" were killed in fighting after the August attacks. The crackdown led to the mass exodus of about 600,000 Rohingya civilians who fled the predominantly Buddhist country into neighboring Bangladesh.

Many survivors in squalid camps inside Bangladesh - described as the world's worst refugee crisis - have reported mass killings, torture, and rape against Rohingya children, women, and men.

"The Burmese military's absurd effort to absolve itself of mass atrocities underscores why an independent international investigation is needed to establish the facts and identify those responsible," said Human Rights Watch's Brad Adams in a statement on Tuesday.

"The Burmese authorities have once again shown that

they can't and won't credibly investigate themselves."

The United Nations has called the majority-Muslim Rohingya in Myanmar the world's most persecuted minority.

Jeremy Laurence, a United Nations spokesman, told a news conference on Tuesday their investigators in Bangladesh found ample evidence of the killing and torture of civilians in Myanmar.

"Our findings are quite clear on what is happening," Laurence said. "What we found took place in Rakhine state... is a textbook example of ethnic cleansing, murder, rape, assault, killings, torture. We heard [this] from people... over and over again."

Human Rights Watch said it is time for the International Criminal Court in The Hague to investigate Myanmar's authorities.

"The military's grave crimes committed with impunity are exactly what the International Criminal Court was created for," Adams said.

The Myanmar military's report and its denunciation by Human Rights Watch came as the United States Secretary of State Rex Tillerson arrives in Myanmar on Wednesday.

Demands have been growing in the United States for Washington to impose economic and travel sanctions against the military and entities under its control over the Rohingya crisis.



The U.S. President Donald Trump said on Tuesday he backed the "safe and voluntary return" of the refugees.

"The United States supports efforts to end the violence, to ensure accountability for atrocities committed," a White House statement quoted the president as saying. "We welcome the commitments by the government of Myanmar and we are ready to support the implementation of the Rakhine recommendations."

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Scottish Labour's interim leader Rowley stands down over alleged misconduct

Scottish Labour interim leader Alex Rowley has resigned from the role amid claims about his conduct, the party has said.

Rowley said he would stand aside over allegations published in The Scottish Sun from a former partner, who accused him of subjecting her to years of "emotional blackmail and abuse".

The 49-year-old woman, who has chosen to remain anonymous, said the Scots Labour chief "destroyed my life" and vowed to speak out in the wake of the torrent of allegations of sexual harassment and abuse against politicians in Westminster and Holyrood.

The Mid Scotland and Fife MSP, who took over as acting leader in August following the shock resignation of Kezia Dugdale, has

categorically denied the allegations.

Rowley said in a statement: "I totally refute these allegations and will take all steps necessary to clear my name."

"These allegations must be properly and thoroughly investigated in line with our party's procedures - and I will refer myself to the party so such an investigation can take place."

"While that investigation is carried out, I will step aside as Deputy Leader, as well as Interim Leader, of the Scottish Labour Party."

Rowley had been due to stand aside at the culmination of the Scottish Labour leadership race on Saturday, with voting already underway to elect either left-wing MSP Richard Leonard or more moderate candidate Anas Sarwar, the party's health spokesman.

A Scottish Labour Party spokesman said: "Alex Rowley has stood aside as Interim and Deputy Leader of Scottish Labour and referred himself to the Party's internal complaints procedure regarding allegations made against him."

Former leader Dugdale said the allegations were "serious and deeply concerning" and urged the party to suspend Rowley while an investigation takes place.

She said: "I commend the bravery of all the women who have come forward with allegations against those in positions of power, and we owe them answers."

"Had I remained in the position of leader of the Scottish Labour Party, I would not have hesitated to suspend Alex Rowley from

the party while these allegations are fully investigated."

It comes amid ongoing challenges for the party north of the border, where Dugdale became the third Scottish Labour leader to resign in the last three years.

All of the major Westminster parties have been plunged into controversy by the sexual harassment scandal, which prompted the resignation of Defense Secretary Michael Fallon as well as investigations into several Tory and Labour MPs.

Meanwhile at Holyrood, childcare minister Mark McDonald apologized and stood down after being accused of inappropriate behavior.

(Source: The Independent)

## Trump pullout from climate pact means even hotter world: study

U.S. President Donald Trump's pullout from the Paris Agreement will push up global temperatures nearly half a degree Celsius (0.9 degrees Fahrenheit) by 2100, according to a report released Wednesday at UN climate talks in Bonn.

If all countries -- including the United States -- honor carbon-cutting pledges under the 196-nation treaty, the world would see 2.8 C of global warming above pre-industrial levels, the Climate Action Tracker (CAT) research group had previously calculated.

That is not nearly good enough to avoid climate catastrophe, scientists say.

The Paris pact, adopted in 2015, calls for capping the rise at "well below" 2 C, and even 1.5 C if possible, to avoid climate-added future of extreme drought, deadly heat waves and superstorms made more destructive by rising seas.

But if the U.S. abandons its goals for reducing greenhouse gases, set under the Barack Obama administration, the end-of-century thermometer will climb even further to

3.2 C, the report showed.

"This is largely due to the fact that the United States is walking away from its 2030 target, and long-term 2050 goals," CAT said in a statement.

In 2015, the United States made a voluntary commitment to cut the country's emissions 26-28 percent below 2005 levels by 2025. Last year, it also laid out a "mid-century strategy" that would see it's emissions slashed 80 percent compared to a 2005 benchmark.

China, India 'stepping up'

The annual analysis of the world's top 32 carbon polluters -- accounting for more than 80 percent of global emissions -- also showed that China and India have accelerated the transition toward greener economies.

"China's emissions growth has slowed dramatically: in the first decade of this century, its emissions grew by 110 percent, but between 2010 and 2015 growth slowed to only 16 percent," the report said.

Arabia should be "the last one which has the right to talk about human rights due to his black record in the humanitarian and legal domains towards its people and the foreigners who were treated as slaves."

"But the biggest disgrace and scandal are represented in supporting the Saudi draft resolution on human rights in Syria, since everyone knows that Saudi Arabia is the greatest and most dangerous dictator on earth, as it employs money and distorts the

principles of religion to suppress its people in the first place and to support terrorism in Syria and every spot and city in this world," Ja'afari said.

The draft resolution "reflects the state of hysteria and political deficiency of the Al Saud regime and its allies, backers, and sponsors after the Syrian Arab Army defeated their Wahhabi terrorist scheme in Syria," he added.

(Source: SANA)

## Zimbabwe's army seizes power, targets 'criminals' around Mugabe

Zimbabwe's military seized power on Wednesday saying it was holding President Robert Mugabe and his family safe while targeting "criminals" in the entourage of the only ruler the country has known in its 37 years of independence.

Soldiers seized the state broadcaster and a general appeared on television to announce the takeover. Armored vehicles blocked roads to the main government offices, parliament and the courts in central Harare, while taxis ferried commuters to work nearby. The atmosphere in the capital remained calm.

In his first contact with the outside world since the takeover, Mugabe spoke by telephone to the president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, and told him he was confined to his home but fine, the South African presidency said in a statement.

It was not clear whether the apparent military coup would bring a formal end to the 93-year-old Mugabe's rule; the main goal of the generals appeared to be preventing Mugabe's wife Grace, 41 years his junior, from succeeding him.

But whether or not he remains in office, it is likely to mark the end of the total dominance of the country by Mugabe, the last of Africa's generation of anti-colonial state founders still in power and one of the continent's most polarizing figures.

Mugabe, still seen by many Africans as an anti-colonial hero, is reviled in the West as a despot whose disastrous handling of the economy and willingness to resort to violence to maintain power destroyed one of Africa's most promising states.

He plunged Zimbabwe into a fresh political crisis last week by firing his vice president and presumed successor. The generals believed that move was aimed at clearing a path for Grace Mugabe to take over and announced on Monday they were prepared to "step in" if purges of their allies did not end.

"We are only targeting criminals around him (Mugabe) who are committing crimes that are causing social and economic suffering in the country in order to bring them to justice," Major General SB Moyo, Chief of Staff Logistics, said on television.

"As soon as we have accomplished our mission, we expect that the situation will return to normalcy."

(Source: Reuters)

## Short of time to form coalition, German parties still apart on migration

German parties meet on Wednesday on the hot issue of immigration with sides divided on whether to limit migrant numbers and with only one day left to conclude exploratory talks for forming a new coalition government.

Chancellor Angela Merkel wants the exploratory talks to end on Thursday, when German media expect her to press all sides to strike a compromise before moving to formal negotiations.

Merkel, 63, is trying to forge an unlikely alliance of her conservatives, the pro-business Free Democrats (FDP) and the ecologist Greens - a combination untested at national level - to allow her to govern for a fourth term as chancellor.

She needs the new team to work to head off fresh elections that mainstream politicians fear could see the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) make further gains after it surged into parliament for the first time after a September election.

On Wednesday, negotiators will try to narrow their differences on immigration - the issue that cost Merkel support in September's national election after her 2015 decision to leave German borders open to more than 1 million migrants.

At stake is a plan by Merkel's conservative bloc to cap the number of people Germany will accept per year on humanitarian grounds at 200,000 - a limit the environmentalist Greens reject.

"There must be a limit," Volker Bouffier, conservative premier in the western state of Hesse, told ARD television. "We say 200,000 is a reasonable level, if one looks at recent years. But we have not yet achieved our objective."

The parties are also at odds over the number of foreigners who qualify to join relatives granted asylum in Germany. Asked if negotiators could overcome their differences at Wednesday's meeting, Bouffier replied: "I am confident. We will see."

Businesses are eager for the parties to reach a deal. "We believe that all parties involved have understood the urgency to reach an agreement by Christmas," said Dieter Kempf, chief of Germany's largest industry association, the BDI.

He added that it was important to avoid a longer period of political uncertainty since this would be "poison" for the companies' willingness to invest. The mood music coming out of the talks has been mixed. Late on Tuesday, Merkel and other senior conservatives drank wine with Greens co-leader Katrin Goering-Eckardt, conservative party sources said.

But the coalition negotiations are complicated by the dynamics within the conservative bloc, which comprises Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and their Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU).

The CSU, worried about losing support in a state election next year, is uncompromising on immigration - a risk for the three-way 'Jamaica' coalition, so-called because the parties' colors match those of the Caribbean country's flag.

CSU Secretary General Andreas Scheuer said his party was ready to compromise, but added: "It is becoming ever more clear that Jamaica is not a pleasure trip ... And some members of the expedition group have not yet set their compass properly."

(Source: Reuters)

## How a rare protest scared the Eritrean regime

➔ For years now, President Afwerki has been successfully crushing all forms of dissidence with his extensive military and security apparatuses. He has managed to either degrade and suppress his subordinates in order to scare them into loyalty, or pushed the rest into corrupt activities in order to wield the threat of potential blackmail.

The Asmara incident is triggering schizophrenic reactions from the state as well as ramped-up militarization. This is an old story, having occurred in the past when the government has exploited any excuse to squeeze tight the vice of repression.

Yet, it also confirms that the power of the gun can only do so much to intimidate a population that has been pushed to the edge. The recent demonstration and similar earlier incidents also suggest that opposition has become decentralized, and that ordinary people are becoming emboldened in the face of armed repression.

(Source: Aljazeera)

## Wahhabis' defeat in Syria caused 'hysteria' in Saudi dictatorship: UN envoy

Syria's ambassador to the UN has slammed an anti-Damascus draft resolution recently proposed by Saudi Arabia and its allies, saying it reveals Saudi "hysteria" caused by the failure of its Wahhabi terror plot in the war-torn country.

Bashar Ja'afari said in a statement to the UN General Assembly that the draft resolution about the human rights situation in Syria was an "arbitrary" document put forward by the countries that themselves "support

terrorism, incite sedition, destroy countries, kill nations, and occupy lands," SANA news agency reported on Wednesday.

The Riyadh regime's proposal of the resolution is "a strange paradox" and an insult to the issue of human rights as well as another scandal for the UN, which was previously subjugated to the Saudi blackmail and kept silent on the kingdom's war crimes in Yemen, Ja'afari said.

The Syrian envoy further noted that Saudi



## Man Utd would let Fellaini go for free as contract talks continue

Manchester United are prepared to let Marouane Fellaini leave for nothing at the end of the season rather than sell the midfielder in January. Fellaini's contract expires on 30 June and while United began talks with the Belgian over a new deal last season, so far there has been no agreement.

The 29-year-old rejected United's latest offer in September. Fellaini, who joined United for £27m in August 2013, was then manager David Moyes' first significant signing.

It is understood Fellaini gave up £4m in bonuses in order to ensure the transfer went through. His fortunes at United have fluctuated. He was booed by his own supporters in December 2016 when he warmed up as a substitute during a game against Tottenham at Old Trafford. However, since then, Fellaini has become a more popular figure. He scored in the Europa League semi-final victory over Celta Vigo and also started in the 2-0 win over Ajax in the final. And when he was linked with a move to Galatasaray in the summer, United manager Jose Mourinho said the Turkish club had more chance of signing him than Fellaini.

He has missed part of this season with injury but has scored four goals in nine games. It is understood Fellaini has a good relationship with Mourinho, which could be a key factor in the player's eventual decision.

(Source: BBC)

## Wenger open to international role after Arsenal reign

Arsenal manger Arsene Wenger is focused on managing the Premier League club but is not ruling out taking over an international team in the future. Wenger has led Arsenal to three league titles and seven FA Cup trophies during his 21-year tenure and signed a new two-year contract at the north London club in May.

Media reports have linked the 68-year-old to several national team managerial roles, including England and France, on multiple occasions. "Maybe, yes, I will do it at some stage but until now I like to be involved every day in the life of a club because the real test is there..." Wenger told beIN Sports.

"But I will not always have the physical strength to do that so maybe I will move into (international coaching). It's a fact my life is linked with football, in what way will be linked to my physical state. Asked whether he could be on the bench at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, he said: "Maybe, you never know."

Arsenal host Tottenham Hotspur on Saturday.

(Source: Guardian)

## Dutch bid to revive past glories as Advocaat departs

Departing Dutch coach Dick Advocaat has challenged the next generation of Netherlands internationals to stand up and be counted if the country is to return to past footballing glories.

The 70-year-old Advocaat, who has had three different spells as coach, finished his last tenure on Tuesday as the Dutch beat Romania 3-0 in a friendly in Bucharest, a month after failing to qualify for the 2018 World Cup. "The players have promised me they are going to take these performances forward," Advocaat said. "There is a determination to start positively again in March," he added in a reference to the team's next international against England. The Dutch football association has given no indication on when it plans to name the new coach.

It has been a horror year for the Dutch whose defeat in Bulgaria in March effectively derailed their World Cup qualification hopes and led to the sacking of coach Danny Blind.

Advocaat was unable to revive the Dutch campaign. They also failed to qualify for the 2016 European Championship in France after finishing as runners-up at the 2010 World Cup and third in Brazil four years later.

The convincing win over Romania, however, was cause for optimism, Advocaat said after setting a new record for the most wins by a Dutch national team coach. His 37 betters the mark of 36 set by Bob Glendenning, the Englishman who coached the Netherlands from 1923-40. Asked what his next job would be, Advocaat told reporters: "If I could get a job with one of the countries going to the World Cup, that would be great."

(Source: Mirror)

## Argentina ex-football official Jorge Delhon kills himself

Argentine former football official Jorge Delhon took his own life on Tuesday just hours after he was accused of taking bribes.

Mr Delhon was accused of taking \$2m (£1.5m) in payments in exchange for rights for broadcasting football games.

The 52-year-old lawyer worked for Football for All, a government programme which held the rights to football broadcasts in Argentina. He was named during the Fifa corruption trial under way in New York.

The trial centers on three former top South American football officials:

■ Jose Maria Marin, the former head of Brazil's Football Confederation

■ Juan Ángel Napout, former Fifa vice-president

■ Manuel Braga, who led Peru's soccer federation until 2014

The former officials have been accused of taking millions of dollars in bribes in exchange for granting contracts for top South American tournaments, charges which they deny.

One of the key witnesses in the trial is Argentine sports marketing executive Alejandro Burzaco.

Giving evidence in the trial on Tuesday, Alejandro Burzaco said he had paid Mr Delhon and another Argentine official \$500,000 each every year from 2011 to 2014 to secure the broadcasting rights to football games. Hours later, police in the Argentine capital, Buenos Aires, announced that Mr Delhon had killed himself.

The trial in New York is expected to last five weeks as prosecutors call dozens of witnesses to testify and present 350,000 pages of evidence. The US investigation into corruption at the world's football governing body, Fifa, was first revealed in May 2015.

Federal prosecutors in New York have since indicted more than 40 sports and football executives.

(Source: BBC)

# Messi, Ronaldo La Liga exit would be 'bigger blow' than Neymar - Tebas

La Liga president Javier Tebas acknowledged that Neymar's summer departure from Barcelona to Paris Saint-Germain has had an effect on La Liga, but claims it would be a "bigger blow" for Spain's top flight to lose Lionel Messi or Cristiano Ronaldo.

PSG broke the world transfer record by signing Neymar from Barcelona for €222 million in August.

Tebas has been highly critical of PSG's summer spending and recently accused the French giants of infringing financial fair play rules.

French Football Federation president Noel Le Graet has defended PSG's spending policy and claimed that other clubs and leagues are jealous.

Asked how Neymar's departure impacted La Liga, Tebas told Europa Press: "Not so much. La Liga is above players. Messi and Cristiano are the ones that have grown it and the ones that have made us what we are today because they have been with us for many years. Their departure would be a bigger blow."

Recently voted the Best FIFA Men's Player for the second year running, Ronaldo is in his ninth season at Real Madrid.

The Portugal captain signed a five-year contract extension a year ago to remain at the Santiago Bernabeu until June 2021. The 32-year-old, who joined Madrid from Manchester United for €94 million in the summer of 2009, said it would not be his "last contract as a player."

Reports in Spain claim that Ronaldo wants to leave Madrid at the end of the season because he is "disappointed" with the new contract offer the Spanish club have presented him.

"He's got a contract signed for many years and he signed it to fulfil it," Tebas said of Ronaldo. "I don't know, it seems like this is



the 19th time that they [the media] say that he is going. I'm not going to discuss this."

Tebas, meanwhile, says there is no danger of seeing Messi leave Barcelona any time soon.

Messi agreed to a four-year contract extension with Barca in July, with his current deal ending next summer. However, no official ceremony took place, leading to speculation that the Argentina captain has not signed the documents.

"Messi has a new contract and that is what FC Barcelona have revealed," Tebas

said. "Contracts become official when they are signed and not when one says that they have been signed. I believe he has signed, if I'm not being deceived, he has signed it."

Mundo Deportivo claimed this week that Neymar could return to La Liga in 2021 and join Madrid, just as Ronaldo's contract with the club expires.

Asked about that possibility, Madrid midfielder Casemiro said his Brazil teammate Neymar would be a great addition to the side.

He told Cadena Cope after Brazil's goal-

less draw with England on Tuesday: "He's a 'crack' [a genius]. He knows what he is doing, and he will always be welcome at Real Madrid. I hope he comes, but he is happy at his club."

Barcelona left-back Jordi Alba, though, cannot envision Neymar in a Madrid jersey.

He told Cadena Ser: "I cannot imagine Neymar wearing white [Madrid colors]. Anything can happen in football, but knowing him, I just cannot imagine it."

(Source: ESPN)

## Russia has done 'everything possible' for RUSADA reinstatement



Russian sports minister Pavel Kolobkov said on Wednesday the country has done everything in its power to have its anti-doping agency (RUSADA) reinstated after it was suspended over allegations of state-sponsored doping.

RUSADA has been suspended since a World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) report in 2015 found evidence of state-sponsored doping and accused it of enabling rather than catching drug cheats.

WADA Director General Olivier Niggli told Reuters last week Russia's refusal to accept responsibility could prevent its athletes from taking part in the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

WADA, which allowed RUSADA to plan and coordinate testing under international supervision in June, is set to address the agency's compliance with international standards at its executive committee and Foundation Board meetings on Wednesday and Thursday.

"We really have done everything possible for RUSADA to retrieve its status," R-Sport news agency quoted Kolobkov as saying.

"Now our colleagues need to evaluate this and make a decision in line with the interests of the entire sports movement. In any case we are continuing our work to clear the name of Russian sport."

One of the conditions for RUSADA's reinstatement requires Russian authorities, including the Ministry of Sport and National Olympic Committee, to publicly accept the findings of the McLaren investigation.

A 2016 report by Canadian lawyer Richard McLaren found that more than 1,000 Russian competitors in more than 30 sports were involved in a conspiracy to conceal positive drug tests over a five-year period.

WADA said last week that it had obtained a database that confirmed allegations of widespread state-sponsored doping in Russia made in the McLaren report.

Despite repeated calls for cooperation with international bodies to help rid Russia of doping, the authorities have never acknowledged any state involvement in the scandal.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) banned six cross-country skiers this month as part of an investigation into allegations of doping among Russians and sample-tampering by laboratory and security officials at the 2014 Sochi Games.

The IOC has said it would decide at its executive board meeting next month on the participation of Russian competitors at Pyeongchang.

(Source: Reuters)

## UK Anti-Doping closes Team Sky 'mystery package' probe



The UK Anti-Doping agency (UKAD) has closed its Team Sky "mystery package" investigation and will not be making any charges, it said on Wednesday.

Team Sky have come under the microscope in recent months after an investigation was launched into a package ordered by former team doctor Richard Freeman and delivered to British rider Bradley Wiggins at the 2011 Criterium du Dauphine race.

Wiggins, a five-times Olympic champion and the 2012 Tour de France winner, retired from cycling last December.

UKAD said it had been unable to confirm or refute the account that the package delivered to Team Sky contained Fluimucil.

Team Sky general manager Dave Brailsford had told British lawmakers that the package contained the legal decongestant Fluimucil.

"Put simply, due to the lack of contemporaneous evidence, UKAD has been unable to definitively confirm the contents of the package," UKAD said in a statement.

"In light of the significant public interest in this particular investigation, which has previously been discussed by the Parliamentary Select Commit-

tee for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, UKAD can confirm that this investigation has now been drawn to a close," it added.

"It follows that UKAD does not intend to issue any anti-doping charges in relation to the package."

UKAD chief executive Nicole Sapsstead said a lack of accurate records had caused problems.

"Our investigation was hampered by a lack of accurate medical records being available at British Cycling," she said. "This is a serious concern."

Team Sky had denied any wrongdoing.

"We are pleased that UK Anti-Doping have concluded their investigation and that they will not be taking any further action," the team said in a statement.

"We have always maintained that there was no wrongdoing and we have co-operated fully with UK Anti-Doping over the last year," Team Sky added.

"Since our inception as a new pro cycling team in 2010 we have continually strengthened our systems and processes so they best support our strong commitment to anti-doping."

(Source: Eurosport)

## Sergio Aguero to be checked by Manchester City after dizzy spell

Sergio Aguero is set for a medical check-up at Manchester City after being taken unwell at half-time in Argentina's friendly against Nigeria.

Sergio Aguero is set for a medical check-up at Manchester City after being taken unwell at half-time in Argentina's friendly against Nigeria.

The club have moved to ease worries about their record scorer's health and at this stage have not ruled him out of Saturday's Premier League game against Leicester.

But Aguero will be assessed by City when he arrives back in Manchester, having been given the go-ahead to fly just hours after being taken to hospital.

The Argentinian Football Federation said Aguero fainted at the break during Tuesday's 4-2 defeat against Nigeria in the Russian city of Krasnodar, however City stated he was always conscious.

The 29-year-old striker scored after 36 minutes in Krasnodar to put Argentina 2-0 ahead, but did not come out for the second half and his team-mates lost their way on the pitch.

The Premier League leaders announced on their website:



"Sergio Aguero has been cleared by doctors to return to Manchester as planned after suffering a dizzy spell during Argentina's 4-2 defeat by Nigeria in Krasnodar.

"Sergio never lost consciousness, and was taken to hospital for precautionary medical checks. He will be assessed by the club's medical team ahead of this weekend's Premier League trip to Leicester City."

The Argentinian federation had earlier stated in a Twitter post that Aguero fainted and was taken for "routine checks just as a precaution".

An update later on Tuesday evening added that Aguero had left hospital and was "at the hotel with the rest of the delegation".

The team were due to leave Krasnodar together at midnight GMT, with their destination Istanbul, before dispersing to their clubs.

Aguero suffered a rib injury in a car crash in Amsterdam during October but swiftly returned to City duty, and on this occasion he may be back in action within days.

Aguero recently beat Eric Brook's goals record for City, with his strike against Napoli in the 4-2 Champions League win on November 1 taking the forward to a total of 178.

Unbeaten City have raced clear at the top of the Premier League with 10 wins from their opening 11 matches this season and beat Arsenal 3-1 before the international break.

(Source: Independent)



# Sareh Javanmardi to sell her medal to help Iran quake victims

**S P O R T S** Paralympic Games d e s k gold medal winner in shooting Sareh Javanmardi is going to sell her medal to raise money for the victims of Sunday's earthquake which left at least 500 people dead in Iran.

The 7.3-magnitude quake struck in the remote border area between Iran and Iraq late Sunday.

The earthquake also caused major damage to buildings and infrastructure in the cities.

As of right now, the earthquake has claimed over 500 lives, injured over 7,000, and has left thousands homeless and in need of support.

"I consider it my duty to take a small step to help my beloved fellow compatriots who have suffered as a result of the quake," Javanmardi said.

Olympic weightlifting champion Kianoush Rostami had put his gold medal up for auction on Tuesday.

The multiple top Iranian athletes and sports celebrities are planning to give back similarly to Rostami at an event taking place in Tehran.

Iran sits on a major fault line between the Arabian and Eurasian plates and has experienced a number of earthquakes in the past.

The deadliest this century occurred in 2003 when a magnitude-6.6 earthquake struck the southeastern city of Bam, killing some 26,000 people.



## Soroush Rafiei linked with Iran's Zob Ahan



**S P O R T S** Al Khor midfielder d e s k Soroush Rafiei will likely reunite with his former coach Amir Ghalenoei in Iranian football club Zob Ahan.

Iranian media reports suggest that the 27-year-old attacking midfielder is a target for Isfahan-based Zob Ahan.

Rafiei had already been linked with a move to Sepahan, headed by Zlatko Kranjcar.

Rafiei joined Al Khor in June on a one-year contract but the Iranian media has reported that the Qatari club are willing to sell him in the January transfer window.

Rafiei started his playing career with Iran's First Division Fajr Sepasi and helped them to promote to the 2011-12 Iran Professional League.

In the summer of 2015 Rafiei signed a two-year contract with Tractor Sazi to spend his conscription period at the club. He played under Amir Ghalenoei in Tabriz-based club.

On 9 January 2017, Rafiei signed a six-month contract with Persian Gulf Pro League club Persepolis. He was given the number 7, which had previously been retired in honor of club legend Ali Parvin. He scored a goal against Esteghlal in 84th Tehran Derby.

## Hamed Haddadi ready to play for Iran at FIBA World Cup qualifiers



**S P O R T S** Iran national basketball team captain d e s k Hamed Haddadi has announced his readiness to participate in the 2019 FIBA Basketball World Cup qualification.

Haddadi, who currently plays for Sichuan Jinjiang Blue Whales, has called Iran basketball coach Mehran Hatami and said he will join the training camp on Friday.

Iran are in Group D with Iraq, Kazakhstan and Qatar. They play Iraq on Nov. 24 at the Prince Hamza Arena before hosting Qatar at the Azadi Gym on 27 November.

Team Melli have a good mix of youth

and veterans on this roster. They have nine players who are 23 years or younger, including rising stars Behnam Yakhchali, Sajjad Masjayeckhi and Vahid Dalirzahan.

Seasoned international campaigners like Rouzbeh Arghavan, Oshin Sahakian and Arsan Kazemi are also among the players in the pool, and they are sure to use their experience in tempering the talents of their younger teammates.

The 2019 FIBA Basketball World Cup qualification (Asia) process will determine the six teams from FIBA Asia and/or FIBA Oceania that will participate at the 2019 FIBA World Cup.

## Jedinak hat-trick sends Australia to World Cup

Captain Mile Jedinak led the way with a second-half hat-trick as Australia brushed aside Honduras 3-1 in the second leg of their intercontinental playoff on Wednesday to secure a place at next year's World Cup finals.

The midfielder settled his compatriots' nerves with a deflected free kick and two penalties to give Australia a comfortable aggregate victory after the 0-0 draw in the first leg last week.

Honduras were bidding for a third successive World Cup appearance but barely threatened the Australia goal until winger Alberth Elis scrambled the ball over the line in stoppage time.

It will be a fourth straight appearance at the World Cup finals, and fifth in total, for Asian champions Australia, who played 22 matches over 29 months to achieve their goal.

"It's unreal," Jedinak said. "We knew it was always going to be a difficult qualifying campaign but this makes it very, very special."

"It's been a tough two-and-a-half years to get to this point but we did it. We're very grateful we're going to another World Cup."

It remains to be seen if Ange Postecoglou will lead the squad to Russia but he was not about to spoil a party that started with a barrage of fireworks over Sydney harbour as



soon as the final whistle sounded.

"Tonight is just about enjoying it ... what happens beyond here can be picked up tomorrow," said the coach, who was reported by local media to be considering his position.

"I'll sit down with the powers that be. Obviously it's important that the planning goes ahead ... it won't take too long. But I'm going to make sure I enjoy this first."

As in San Pedro Sula last Friday, the Socceroos had the better of a forgettable first half without being able to forge a breakthrough.

### ■ LONE STRIKER

Tim Cahill returned to the team from injury and started as a lone striker but his team mates were unable to present him with any clear-cut chances to notch up his 51st international goal.

Apart from a Tom Rogic shot straight at goalkeeper Donis Escobar, Aaron Mooy's set-piece deliveries provided Australia's main threat but Honduras survived reasonably comfortably until the break.

The nervous wait for an opening goal ended seven minutes into the second half when Rogic finally put together a trademark mazy runs and was brought down on the edge of the penalty box.

Jedinak stepped up to fire his free kick wide of the wall and into the midriff of substitute defender Henry Figueroa, with the resulting deflection sending the ball back past the diving Escobar into the net.

The 77,060 crowd had barely retaken their seats when Cahill almost doubled the lead with a header from the edge of the penalty area that landed on Escobar's crossbar.

(Source: Reuters)

## Iran close to appointing Mac Wilkins as Hadaddi's coach

**TASNIM** — Iranian discus thrower Ehsan Haddadi says an agreement has been reached with American athletic coach Mac Wilkins.

Haddadi won the nation's first ever athletics medal in Olympics with a silver. He finished in second place in 2012 Olympic Games in London with a throw of 68.18 meters.

Haddadi has recently traveled to the U.S. to negotiate with Mac Wilkins on behalf of Iran's Athletic Federation.

"I've talked to Mr. Wilkins and he told me I can throw more than 70 meters. I am going to win a gold medal in the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta and a medal in 2020 Olympic Games," Haddadi said.

Wilkins competed for the United States in the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal, Quebec, Canada in the discus throw, where he won the gold medal with a distance of 67.50 m to defeat Wolfgang Schmidt of East Germany.

He also won a silver medal in the discus throw at the 1984 Summer Olympics held in Los Angeles. He placed 5th in the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, Korea.

## Iran ambassador to Qatar meets Qatar Football Association President

Iran's ambassador to Qatar Mohammed Ali Sobhani met with the President of the Qatar Football Association (QFA), Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa bin Ahmed al-Thani, in QFA's headquarters on Tuesday.

QFA Vice President Saoud al-Mohannadi, General Secretary Mansoor al-Ansari, and Executive Director Ali Dawood also attended the meeting, which took place at the Al Bidda Tower in Doha.

The two parties discussed bilateral relations and ways to strengthen and further develop them. They also discussed matters of mutual interest and agreed to promote co-operation in the future.

During the meeting, the QFA president and Iranian ambassador embraced the fruitful relationship and ongoing communication between the QFA and the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI), which mainly focuses on the exchange of knowledge and expertise for the development of football in both countries.

The QFA president stressed on the importance of the deep rooted relationship between the two federations and how football plays a key role in promoting bilateral relations between all federations.

Sobhani also pointed out that Doha has become one of the most important sports hubs in the world, and expressed willingness to facilitate all the necessary measures to strengthen the relationship between the FFIRI and QFA.

(Source: Olympic.qa)

## Cahill would 'do anything' to be in Australia's World Cup squad

Tim Cahill has hinted he could leave Melbourne City in order to be part of Australia's World Cup squad, claiming he would "do anything" to remain in the Socceroos side.

The former Everton forward played 66 minutes in Australia's crucial 3-1 play-off win against Honduras on Wednesday, helping his country to book their place in Russia next year, having been left on the bench for the first leg in San Pedro Sula due to an ankle injury.

And Cahill's attentions quickly turned to what he must do to appear at a fourth consecutive finals, having played only 60 minutes in the A-League this season.

"Now I've got to make some big decisions," he told Fox Sports at full-time when asked about his international future. "I need game time. This is all I wanted. I knew it was only a matter of time."

"Never close a door on something like this because I would do anything to stay a part of this team."

Cahill is Australia's all-time record scorer with 50 international goals.

(Source: Goal)

## France named surprise host of 2023 Rugby World Cup

France will host the 2023 Rugby World Cup in a huge surprise after the Council of the sport's governing body went against the recommendations of an extensive evaluation report in a secret ballot on Wednesday.

South Africa had been recommended by World Rugby's Board but the Council members went for France, which also held the tournament in 2007.

Ireland, which has never hosted the World Cup on its own, was eliminated after the first round when it secured eight of the 39 available votes to the 13 of South Africa and 18 of France. In the second round, France secured 24 votes to South Africa's 15.

The three bidding countries did not take part in the ballot. The remaining Six Nations and SANZAR countries had three votes each with the rest made up from the six regional associations and smaller rugby countries. A minimum of 20 votes were needed.

South Africa, which staged the tournament in 1995, winning it in their first appearance after missing the first two World Cups because of the apartheid sporting ban, had been favourite after coming out clearly on top of the evaluation report.

South Africa received an overall score of 78.97 percent to 75.88 for France and 72.25 for Ireland on a selection of weighted criteria but Council members were free to ignore the report if they wished.

Bernard Laporte, the head of the French union, had publicly complained about many aspects of the evaluation report, saying it was "nonsense and full of errors" and accusing World Rugby of incompetence.

Speaking in London after the announcement, the former national team coach said: "It was a heavy challenge for us. We were late but I'm proud that we've been chosen."

"Like Ireland and South Africa, we've had a bid that was solid. We'll do our best and I promise it will be a fantastic World Cup, I'm convinced of that."

World Rugby chairman Bill Beaumont said: "We had three great bids. France have hosted the event before and I think it will be an exciting tournament."

"It's been a long process and we feel that for the first time, we've put the results of our evaluation process out to the public and people have been able to comment on them and judge for themselves."

Japan will host the next World Cup, in 2019.

(Source: Fox Sports)

## First hijab-wearing Barbie based on Ibtiyah Muhammad

Barbie will release its first hijab-wearing character in 2018, a doll based on the Olympian fencer Ibtiyah Muhammad.

The 31-year-old sportswoman rose to fame at the 2016 Summer Olympics, after becoming the first female Muslim-American to earn a medal at the games, and the first American woman to don the headscarf at the competition.

"Thank you @Mattel for announcing me as the newest member of the @Barbie #Shero family! I'm proud to know that little

girls everywhere can now play with a Barbie who chooses to wear hijab! This is a childhood dream come true," said Muhammad, writing on Twitter.

"Shero" is a portmanteau of she and hero, referring to positive female role models.

Barbie confirmed the news on Monday, after an unveiling ceremony at Glamour magazine's Women of the Year summit.

"Ibtiyah continues to inspire women and girls everywhere to break boundaries," the



company said on Twitter.

Social media users applauded the move

as a significant step towards representation.

"We now finally have in 2017 a hijab wearing @Barbie with the last name Muhammad ... Say it again for the People in the back: REPRESENTATION MATTERS," said Qasim Rashid, a human rights activist.

"LOVE this! @Barbie's first doll with a hijab is modeled after @IbtiyahMuhammad. Representation matters. Black. Muslim. Magic," said Britni Danielle, a writer.

(Source: Aljazeera)



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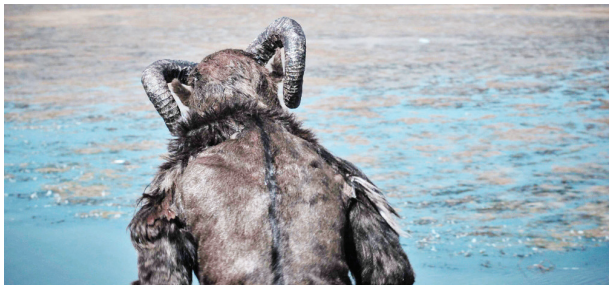
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## “Animal” wins award at Denver festival

**A R T** TEHRAN — The acclaimed Iranian short film “Animal” co-directed by filmmakers Bahram and Bahman Ark received the Liberty Global International Student Filmmaker Award at the 40th Denver Film Festival on Sunday. The film tells the story of a man who attempts to cross a frontier disguised as a ram.



A Scene from “Animal” co-directed by Bahram and Bahman Ark  
Iranian films “Disappearance” by Ali Asgari and “Retouch” by Kaveh Mazaheri were also screened during the festival, which was held in the U.S. city of Denver located in the state of Colorado.

## “Kupal” named best foreign film at Weyauwega festival

**A R T** TEHRAN — Iranian director Kazem Mollai’s drama “Kupal” was selected as best foreign-language film at the Weyauwega International Film Festival, the organizers of the American event announced last week.



Levon Haftvan acts in a scene from “Kupal”.

Starring Levon Haftvan, the film tells the story of a hunter and a taxidermist called “Dr. Ahmad Kupal”. On the last day of the year, just moments before the arrival of the New Year, he faces an unexpected challenge.

The best documentary feature award was given to “Cinema Travelers” directed by Shirley Abraham and Amit Madheshiya from India, and “So We Bowl” by Max Hauser from the U.S. was picked as best narrative short.

The festival was held from November 8 to 11.

## As “Roman J. Esq.” Denzel Washington explores social injustice

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — For his latest role, as an attorney who defends young people of color imprisoned without trial, Oscar-winning actor Denzel Washington weighed how family dynamics played into the lives of young criminals.



Oscar-winning actor Denzel Washington acts in a scene from “Roman J. Israel, Esq.”

“I grew up with guys who did decades (in prison) and it had as much to do with their fathers not being in their lives as it did to do with any system,” Washington said in a recent interview with Reuters about his new film, “Roman J. Israel, Esq.”

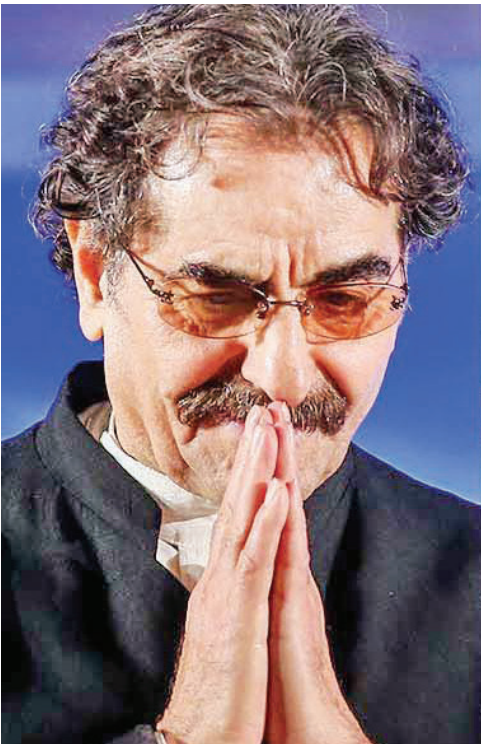
The movie, written and directed by Dan Gilroy, opens on Friday. The actor plays the title role of a lawyer with encyclopedic knowledge.

Washington, recalling some of the people he grew up with, added: “By the time we got to 13, 14, different things happened. Now I was doing just as much as they were, but they went further ... I just didn’t get caught, but they kept going down that road and then they were in the hands of the system. But it’s about the formative years. You’re not born a criminal.”

The cases explored in “Roman J. Israel, Esq.” reflect a “massively important issue in our country,” director Gilroy said.

“Our prison system needs reform at a fundamental level. We have the highest incarceration rate of any place in the Western world ... It’s not racially equal, it’s not socio-economically equal,” he said.

# Shahram Nazeri, Kamkars team up to give benefit concert for Kermanshah quake victims



This combination photo shows vocalist Shahram Nazeri and the Kamkars. (Tasnim/Mehr/Hamed Malekpur/ Mohammadreza Abbasi)

**TEHRAN** — Legendary Iranian vocalist Shahram Nazeri and the Kamkars will join together in a concert to raise funds for the victims of the devastating earthquake that hit their homeland Kermanshah in western Iran on Sunday.

“The concert is scheduled to be held at the Grand Hall of the Interior Ministry in Tehran, and all the money that will be raised by the concert will be dedicated to those affected by the earthquake,” Hana Kamkar, a member of the Kamkars, Iran’s leading Kurdish family music ensemble, told the Persian service of ILNA on Wednesday.

The exact date of the concert will be announced in the near future.

Following the devastating earthquake, numerous Iranian artists have announced that they would organize various programs to help the victims of the natural disaster.

Pop singer Farzad Farzin and rock star Reza Yazdani have pledged that they will dedicate part of the profit from their upcoming concerts to the victims.

“Many have said that expressing condolences would not provide shelter, food and medicine, and they are right. All Iranian individuals can have a share as much as they can in helping to remove the obstacles. Perhaps one day we will look forward to their help, so better to begin from ourselves and not wait for others,” Farzin has said in a

message posted on his Instagram page.

Farzin will give his concerts in the Canadian cities of Vancouver and Toronto on November 24 and 25.

Yazdani also plans to dedicate part of the funds, which will be raised by his Tehran concert scheduled for November 23, to the victims of the quake.

He also postponed the release of his new album “The Mixed” to remember those killed in the earthquake. The album was to be released on November 15, but the date has been postponed to November 20.

The powerful earthquake killed over 470 people and injured thousands.

## “No Date” nabs awards at Bratislava

**A R T** TEHRAN — The award-winning Iranian drama “No Date, No Signature” has won two awards at the 19th Bratislava International Film Festival in Slovakia while messages from director Vahid Jalilvand and the film’s star Navid Mohammadzadeh implored the audience to hold a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the recent earthquake in the western Iranian region of Kermanshah.

The film was presented with the FIPRESCI Jury Award and Mohammadzadeh was selected as best actor during the award ceremony of the festival at Kino Lumiere on Tuesday evening, the Persian service of IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Jalilvand and Mohammadzadeh could not attend the ceremony and Iranian deputy ambassador Hamidreza Madad received the awards on behalf of them.

However, Jalilvand and Mohammadzadeh expressed their thanks to the organizers in videos screened at the ceremony.

“Sorry, if I don’t feel so very happy, because I was informed hours ago that many of my compatriots in western Iran were killed in a devastating earthquake,” Jalilvand said in the video.

“I don’t know if I should be happy or sad



Navid Mohammadzadeh in a scene from “No Date, No Signature”

at this time as many people in Kermanshah and Ilam, my homeland, have been killed in the earthquake,” Mohammadzadeh said and dedicated his award to the victims of the natural disaster, which claimed lives of over 470 people.

“Men Don’t Cry” by Alen Drljevic from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Croatia and Germany was picked as best fiction film while Soleen Yusef from Iraq was named best director for his film “House without Roof”.

The award for best actress went to Laetitia Dosch from France for her role in “Montparnasse Bienvenue” by Léonor Serraille.

## U.S. festivals honor Iran’s “Limit”

**A R T** TEHRAN — “Limit” by Iranian director Javad Darai has won awards at two international events in the U.S.

The film, which puts the spotlight on the problems that the physically challenged face in society, won Second Prize for Best Suspense Short Film at the Miami FearFest.

Davud Moinikia also received the Best Performance Award for his role in the film at the festival, which was held on November 10 and 11.

“Limit” also shared the Most Promising Young Artist Award with “Schoolyard Blues” by Maria Eriksson from Sweden at the St. Cloud Film Fest.

“The Burden” by Niki Lindroth von Bahr from Sweden received the Grand Jury Prize of the festival, which ran from November 4 to 11.



A poster for “Limit” by Javad Darai.

## Iranian games scoop awards at IMGA

**A R T** TEHRAN — Three Iranian games have won four out of a total of nine main awards at the International Mobile Gaming Awards (IMGA) in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

Winners were awarded during a ceremony in Amman, Jordan on Saturday, the organizers announced.

“4Wheelers” from Ordibehesht Studio was picked as the Best Multiplayer Game while “Mafioso” from Paezean Game Studio received the Excellence in Art Award.

“Around Mars” by Iranian game developer Behzad Anjompur won the Excellence in Audio Visual Art and Design Award and Best Upcoming Game Award.

“Fat Bunny” from Groovy Antoid Studio in Lebanon received the Best Quickplay Game Award and “Lost Light” from Tunisia was named the Best Meaningful Play. Other winners were from Kuwait, Palestine and Saudi Arabia.

The winners were selected among the 52 nominees including 16 Iranian games.

After announcing the nominees in early October, the IMGA deleted Iranian games from the list based on an agreement between IMGA MENA and its partners, the



A poster for “Mafioso” from Paezean Game Studio.

data and mobile services provider Zain Jordan and the game studio Maysalward.

However, they revised their decision after Iran made a protest against the action.

The winner games are eligible to be considered for an IMGA Global Award early next year.

The IMGA is a worldwide competition that started in 2004, and it covers several different regions. In addition to the IMGA Global, which is open to all, there is also IMGA MENA, IMGA Southeast Asia and IMGA China.

## “Release from Heaven” best animation at Ft. McMurray fest

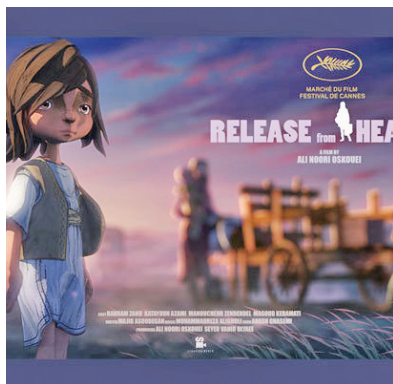
**A R T** TEHRAN — “Release from Heaven” by Iranian director Ali Nuri Oskui was crowned best animation at the Fort McMurray International Film Festival in Canada last Sunday.

The acclaimed film is about a female writer and teacher, who accompanies two of her students on an inner spiritual journey in a war-torn country.

The Animation Day in Cannes honored this movie with the Animation that Matters Award this year in May.

“This Is Home” by Var Bhalla from Canada won the award for best feature movie at the Fort McMurray festival.

Johan Karrento from Finland was named best director for “God Hates Finland” while “The Good Mother” by Sarah Clift from the UK was selected as best short film.



A poster for “Release from Heaven”

The award for best performance went to Valeria Chavez for her role in “Still Devout” by Melissa Perez from the U.S.

## Stars sign on to support UNICEF World Children’s Day

**NEW YORK (AP)** — David Beckham, Millie Bobby Brown and Hugh Jackman are among celebrities and world leaders announced Tuesday as participants and official supporters of the UNICEF initiative World Children’s Day.

The organization said events around the globe will focus on child takeovers to mark the day Monday, including a gathering at the United Nations in New York. That’s where UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres will welcome children and singer-songwriters Chloe x Halle will perform a new track written for the occasion.

Young people in Geneva, meanwhile, will take over the Palais des Nations to perform a special cover of Pink’s hit “What About Us.”

In Spain, children will join Leo Messi and others on the powerhouse soccer team FC Barcelona for a practice session, while in India, cricket will be the game for 22 child athletes who will play with legendary cricketer and UNICEF goodwill ambassador Sachin Tendulkar.

Brown, who appears on the Netflix series “Stranger Things,”



This combination photo shows, from left, Hugh Jackman during the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah on Jan. 26, 2016, actress Millie Bobby Brown in New York on Oct. 31, 2017 and soccer legend David Beckham at the amfAR charity gala in Cap d’Antibes, southern France on May 25, 2017. Jackman, Brown and Beckham are among celebrities announced as participants and official supporters of the UNICEF initiative World Children’s Day on Nov. 20. (AP Photo/File)

will kick off the day in Australia. Jackman is lending his voice via video to a fundraiser focused on providing clean water to those in need, to take place in gyms around the world on Saturday.

“I am so excited for the first-ever global celebration of World Children’s Day on November 20th with UNICEF,” Brown said in a statement. “It’s our day, everyone! A day for us to raise our voices and unite. So let’s do it — in our schools, with our friends, with our families!”

Beckham, a UNICEF goodwill ambassador, will appear in a short film with children. Other events are planned for Copenhagen and Accra, where 10 children from eight African countries will tell the world about the continent in a series of Ted Talk-style appearances called Africa Dialogues.

More than 50 companies and organizations around the world will turn over key roles to children, including LEGO, Qantas and H&M Foundation. In schools, children will also take over classrooms and assemblies to raise their voices and fundraise in solidarity with the world’s most disadvantaged and vulnerable children.